



Acharya Narendra Dev



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BUILDERS OF MODERN INDIA

Acharya Narendra Dev

Bhagawati Sharan Singh

Translation

Rupali Kishore



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ACHARYA NARENDRA DEV (English)

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Preface

Writing Acharya Narendra Dev's biography was a challenging task. He left behind, hardly any documents about himself. Even if there were any, they were not preserved. Those who had them, or collected them, declined to part with them. Most of his childhood friends and contemporary acquaintances, were no more. Therefore, collecting the requisite material for his biography, and meeting the people associated with him, to gain information about him, was both time consuming and expenditure incurring. This posed difficulties.

A successful biographer knows how much time and efforts go into compiling an intimate biography. Yet, the request of friends at Publications Division, was my heart's own desire and acceptable too. I will always remain in Acharya's debt. The affection that I received from him, was invaluable. Writing this biography, has not in any way, freed me of his debt, but only increased the yearning to study and understand him better.

This biography is a serious attempt to catch a glimpse into his psyche. If, through this endeavour, there increases in the readers too, the urge to learn more about him, follow his ideals, and read his writings, then I will be happy otherwise too, I will be satisfied, considering this, a tribute to all those who assisted me in writing this, with all their goodwill. I am particularly glad to record my gratitude to Shri Ajay Kumar and Shri Chandra Dutt.

Bhagawati Sharan Singh.

Editor's Note

'The Builders of Modern India' series is an important publication of the Publications Division. Under the series, are published the biographies of such great men, who have made significant contributions in liberating India from the chains of slavery of foreign rule and the development of its culture and civilization. These great men always steered clear of self-promotion, believing nation building and service of nation to be their natural obligations. Blossoming on this fertile, blessed land, they spread the fragrance of their achievements before returning to the soil that they originated from. The light-houses of ideals and principles they built for our guidance, are still proving the adage - 'from darkness to light we go'. Even today, their influence resonates within our nation.

We are indebted to the great men who illuminated for us, a path, shorn of thorns, having cut through the dense forests of disappointment, to end adverse foreign rule. We are proudly advancing on that path. It is our supreme duty to introduce these great men to the future generations. Inspired by such a sentiment, Publications Division has begun the series.

In the biographies published under the series, instead of emphasizing the events, that aspect of the great men's lives has been highlighted, which is associated, in some way or the other, with building a modern India. Therefore, it would hardly be appropriate to search for a comprehensive life-history or a detailed analysis of their ideologies, in the biographies, published under the series.

Acharya Narendra Dev is the next great man, whose biography is being published under the series - 'The Builders of Modern India'. This biography is authored by Late Shri Bhagawati Sharan Singh. The importance of Acharya Narendra Dev can be gauged from the fact that in 1947, such a great man as Gandhi himself proposed his name for the post of Congress President.

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Birth and Childhood

Each individual is bound by the place and time of his birth and lives by it. The lives of people revolve around these twin factors, until they pass away, proving the transience of the world. Such ordinary mortals in the world, neither acquire any meaningful role, nor contribute much to their environment. Their whole life is spent, fulfilling their own and family's basic needs of food and clothes. Although, this is also of prime importance in life, and an obligatory duty of a householder, but to fulfill these objectives, when unethical means are adopted, it deprives life of values.

Often, people become the victim of circumstance. But the courage to fight and overcome them, transforms an ordinary person into an extraordinary personality. It is necessary to understand Narendra Dev, his family background and environment, since his life, as seen and understood by people, was definitely one lived beyond the boundaries of time and space.

Narendra Dev's ancestors lived along the north-western borders of India, in Sialkot region of old Punjab. Later, they moved to Faizabad, in Uttar Pradesh. The British *amaldari* of Oudh was established in 1856. Narendra Dev's grandfather, Shri Kunjbiharilal traded in utensils at Faizabad, the then capital of Oudh. He educated his younger brother in English language, since it was patronised as the court-language, by the rulers. This shows the foresight and common sense of Shri Kunjbiharilal.

In one of his memoirs, Narendra Dev writes – “The younger brother of my paternal grandfather was the first person in our family to receive English education. He taught at the Old Canning College. He imparted English education to my father

and his elder brother.” Prof. Mukut Biharilal writes that Narendra Dev’s father, Baldev Prasad practiced law at Sitapur with Munshi Muralidhar, a disciple of his father’s younger brother, Sohan Lal, who was a teacher at Canning College. Munshi Muralidhar enjoyed the affection of Sohan Lal. Therefore, when Narendra Dev’s father cleared law exams, he was sent to Sitapur, to practice law there with Muralidhar.

Talent, foresight and diligence ran in Narendra Dev’s family. It was foresight that made his grandfather encourage his younger brother, to study English. Narendra Dev’s father could not clear his B.A. because of an eye ailment. Yet he passed the law exam by memorising what his paternal grandfather read out to him, from the law books. Narendra Dev belonged to a family of achievers and was good at applying himself to the task at hand. He led an austere life due to the influence of his childhood environment. Not much is known about the environment at Sitapur. But Narendra Dev’s father, Babu Baldev Prasad, was known to be a pious man. Upon his father’s death, he left Sitapur for Faizabad. At the time, Narendra Dev was two years old.

Babu Baldev Prasad’s law practice flourished at Faizabad, and he earned wealth and distinction there. Despite his achievements, he remained untouched by arrogance, due to his saintly disposition. It is said that he was a staunch follower of *sanatana dharma* and so, fasts and festivals, rites and rituals and other ceremonies, must have been followed in his house. However, while at Sitapur, under the influence of a hermit, he is said to have gravitated towards *Vedanta* and respect for logic, instead of blind, faith. He acquired good knowledge of *Vedanta*, which also influenced the child Narendra Dev. As Narendra Dev did later observe, “The traditional values of life should not be accepted without due analysis.” However, in Narendra Dev’s life, while there can be glimpsed extraordinary logic and reason, so can instinctual coordination, due to childhood influences. As he observes, “Boycotting all old ideals and principles is not fair. It

would be inappropriate to disrespect the enduring experience and acquired knowledge in the society. On the contrary, it is essential, to study the old ideals and ancient culture.”

Narendra Dev’s paternal grandfather was an adherent of *sanatana dharma*, but his son became interested in the study of Vedanta also. Therefore, in Narendra Dev’s mind, not only did the concept of monotheism take roots, but his thoughts also progressed to the form of *Brahma*. Persian, the language of the nobles, though respected, was of no help in free thought and expression. Therefore, beside English, Babu Baldev Prasad studied Sanskrit language, by himself. As a result, not only did the medium of Sanskrit help him appreciate his culture and religion, but he was also able to study original religious scriptures. His religious inclinations led him to establish *sanatana dharma* Sabha at Faizabad.

It is worth mentioning that at that time, alongside *Sanatana Dharma*, *Arya Samaj* movement was also gaining ground and was useful in strengthening the feelings of nationalism. It is noteworthy that most of the national leaders, contemporary or senior to Acharya Narendra Dev, came from these two sects and several remained its active functionaries. *Sanatana Dharma* influenced Narendra Dev’s childhood and early life.

Referring to an unpublished memoir of Narendra Dev, Mukut Biharilal quotes him, “In those days, several religious debates took place in *Sanatana Dharma* and *Arya Samaj*. Scholars from *Arya Samaj* severely criticised idolatry, belief in prophets and the authenticity of the scriptures, *Puranas*, using bitter words that hurt sentiments.” Mukut Bihari Lal observes that, “Narendra Dev’s father was anguished by the irresponsible behaviour of those belonging to *Arya Samaj*, and having been brought up in a *Sanatana Dharma* atmosphere, Narendra Dev also harbored rancor towards *Arya Samaj*.” However, Narendra Dev soon rid himself of this narrow-mindedness and grew to respect the merits of the different sects. Though, as

mentioned above, during the early years, he was an adherent of *Sanatana Dharma*, and had memorised *Rudri* and *Geeta*.

Narendra Dev's childhood atmosphere left deep impressions on his personality. He grew up watching his father busy with house-construction, gardening and buying good books. He spent a major part of his income on the learned, scholars and saints. He also duly encouraged and helped students. Beside being a good host, he would also spend money on religious causes. He had opened in Ayodhya, a boys hostel where students would reside and receive free education in Sanskrit language. He wrote booklets in English, Hindi and Persian languages for children. Narendra Dev learnt English from the primer written by his father for his elder brother.

Narendra Dev was sharp in studies and honest by nature. He was averse to his classmates smoking cigarettes. As he admitted himself, "My father influenced me strongly." This influence would be a lasting one also, since he received special attention from his father, who would daily take him along to work and in free time, taught him.

In childhood, besides his father, his teacher, Dattatreya Bhikhaji Ranade also impressed Narendra Dev much. Beside being a capable teacher, he also enthused his students. He had a unique and impressive style of teaching. Two other able teachers of Narendra Dev were Master Radhey Shyam and master Radheyraman Lal. Pleased with Narendra Dev's character, manners and discipline, Radheyraman Lal handed over to him, the keys of the school library. Radheyraman Lal only officially held the charge of the librarian while Narendra Dev became the *de-facto* Librarian.

Narendra Dev was not a sportsperson perhaps because of his weak health. As he himself admitted his physical attributes were not good. However, Narendra Dev always stood first in his class and for his moral conduct, remained a favourite of his

teachers. He was considered an ideal among his fellow students. Once however, his Sanskrit teacher, becoming displeased, prepared quite a tough question paper for the half-yearly exams. Narendra Dev was dismayed. His work at the school library helped him when he remembered Pandit had borrowed from there certain question-papers of previous years. Surmising that in the exams, questions would be asked from those papers, Narendra Dev prepared the answers and tutored his friends as well. The questions were as anticipated and the answers given well. Pandit had to award good marks. Narendra Dev got forty-six marks out of fifty, such was his intelligence!

Under his father's care and affection, Narendra Dev's childhood was marked by the observation of rituals being performed. His father got his thread-ceremony performed when he was ten years old. It became his daily routine, to perform evening-prayers. With his father, he would regularly recite prayers and verses of *Gayatri* and *Geeta*. His father also made him practice family traditions and Vedic chanting under the care of a Brahmin from Maharashtra. Narendra Dev's childhood was marked by introduction to Vedas and the Vedic culture and its images. In his views and in-depth study of History and Philosophy, he always asserted that the original source of our culture and civilisation is the Vedic omnibus.

Narendra Dev was well-versed in Sanskrit due to his childhood education in *Amarkosha* and *Laghu-Kaumudi*. This served him well later. He could easily read the original scriptures instead of translations of the various philosophies, culture and history of his country. At the time, in Hindu households, a lot of respect was accorded to Tulsi's *Ramcharit Manas*, Hindi *Mahabharata*, *Soorsagar* and *Brij-vilas*. In almost all such families, the literate men and women would read it regularly and adapt the morality and discipline in life. This conduct was supportive of society and proved useful in saving it from anarchy.

Narendra Dev also got to read, in childhood itself, *Ramcharit Manas*, *Mahabharata* and *Soorsagar*.

It has been mentioned before that Narendra Dev's family values were based on *Sanatana Dharma*. Therefore, having been brought up in such an atmosphere, he not only remained unaffected by *Arya Samaj* but was also distressed by its verbal onslaught. However, as he grew up and his thinking became liberal, he became aware of conservatism and communalism prevalent even in the *Sanatana Dharma*. The liberal form of Hindu religion seemed lost in it, so Narendra Dev attempted to free himself of the religious dogmas, and ultimately he made that moral and cultural heritage, which may be called Indian culture, the basis of his life.

Under British rule, another meaning of communalism came to fore. If that meaning had been superimposed on this word, then, possibly, it would have evolved in another manner altogether and that would have saved it from this new and flawed meaning ascribed to the *Sanatana Dharma*. Communalism basically means, to give complete form. In this sense, *Sanatana Dharma*, *Arya Samaj*, Buddhism and Jainism etc. would actually be sects, leading to the path of universal religion, for human welfare viz. to speak the truth, not to steal, be sensitive to the sufferings of others, be merciful etc. Such conduct has been considered in all sects, as universal human values.

Actually, religion is directly related to the human behaviour. One's idol worship, belief in God or lack of it, are no obstacle to one's religious conduct. While being totally religious, a person can be a pious Hindu, Muslim, Christian, and Buddhist etc. His community is his own belief and accordingly he perceives God and practices different ways of worship while paying off the debt of the society. However, the British diplomacy put paid to this tolerance and distanced the two main communities of Hindus and Muslims from each other. Hindu-Muslim riots were

engineered, as communal riots. The human way of life when everyone contributes to each other's welfare, was destroyed.

Fortunately, during Narendra Dev's childhood, communal harmony was still very much there, in Faizabad, where Hindu-Muslims lived together peacefully. Their mutual relations were congenial and both participated in each other's festivals and ceremonies to the extent that several Hindus would keep *Tajia* on *Moharram* and serve Sorbets, just like the Shia Muslims did. The good behaviour of Oudhs Nawab towards the Hindus had retained its charm. The Nawab duly respected the feelings of Hindus and had even gifted to a sage a small fort of *Hanumangarhi*, with several villages to generate revenue for their Hindu neighbours. Such a communal life, the element of tolerance and mutual social considerations strongly affected Narendra Dev as a child and manifested itself in his character.

Due to his tolerance, Narendra Dev often suffered badly in his political career but his upbringing made him keep a safe distance from all kinds of communalism used as tools by the British.

Due to his father's social, religious and intellectual prestige, Narendra Dev came in contact with many eminent personalities viz. Pandit Madhav Prasad Mishra, Swami Ramtirtha and Malviya. Madhav Prasad held a significant position in the contemporary society and out of affection for Narendra Dev's father when visiting Faizabad, would stay for months at his residence. He loved Bengali language in particular and translated the Bengali book. '*Deshee Katha*'. He was a liberal nationalist and Narendra Dev could not remain unaffected by his love of Bengali and Sanskrit language. He only named Avinash Lal as Narendra Dev and Narendra lived up to the meaning of both names. Avinash, the name given by his father made him the recipient of immortal fame and Narendra, the name given by Mishra gave him a supreme position though (among humans) and he was worshipped like a God.

Narendra Dev was greatly impressed by Malviya and Swami Ramtirth. Pt. Madan Mohan Malviya was a true *Sanatana Dharma* Brahmin, according to his family tradition, but this was not all. He also laid supreme emphasis upon the moral qualities and believed good education not only developed the human character and personality but also enabled one to glimpse the same soul in all human beings. Malviya was beyond the desire for out-of-this world and unearthly, heaven and salvation. Serving the society was his religion. He often quoted from Mahabharata, a *shloka* with the meaning, what best can one do with the divine powers then provide relief to human miseries. Malviya wanted to be born again and again, to serve his nation. His personality greatly impressed Narendra Dev.

His first glimpse of Malviya was at Faizabad which the latter visited in 1904 when Narendra Dev recited before Malviya, some verses from *Bhagvad-Gita*, a book that he had memorised completely, during its daily readings, with his father. His clear diction and pronunciation of Sanskrit language impressed Malviya.

Narendra Dev was also much impressed by Swami Ramtirth and learnt from him, the lesson of renunciation in life. It seems that Swami Ramtirth was a frequent visitor to Narendra Dev's father's house. Swami Ramtirth the famous Indian personality needs no introduction. One incident related to him that inspired Narendra Dev's morality, ethics, simple life and sense of renunciation may well be mentioned here. Once, both Swami and Pandit Madhav Prasad Mishra were staying at Narendra Dev's father's residence. On the eve of his departure, Swami was packing his belongings when Madhav commented casually, about why should a *sanyasin* need any possession at all. That was it. Ramtirth left all his possessions behind. When he reached his destination on the mountain, he wrote a letter, "Ram is happy."

Narendra Dev's education began at home. His father had written some books for children. It appears that the syllabus-books taught those days, in the primary classes, did not seem

appropriate to his father, from the point of view of both, the subject and the language. As mentioned before, Narendra Dev's father also took him along, to court and himself tutored him probably, in Sanskrit, Persian and certain ethics-based subjects. For English, Narendra Dev's friend, Pandit Kalidin Awasthi was the regular home-tutor who taught Narendra Dev and his siblings, Hindi, Maths and Geography. Narendra Dev was the second child among four brothers and two sisters. Mahendradev, his elder brother, known as Lalji was a famous lawyer in Faizabad. Another brother, Surendradev died young. The youngest brother, Yogendradev became a famous doctor of Faizabad.

In 1902, at the age of 12 years, Narendra Dev was admitted to a local school at Faizabad. In 1906, after clearing the entrance exams, he wanted to study at Central Hindu College, in Banaras, probably due to its association with Mahamana Malviya and Smt. Annie Besent. His classmates however, encouraged him to join, with them, Mayo Central College at Prayag. There, he suffered small pox, which cost him an academic year. Here too, he endeared himself to his teachers.

Narendra Dev's teacher, Prof. Stuart was ill informed about ancient Indian History for which other students ridiculed him but Narendra Dev never did so. Narendra Dev learnt Medieval History from Dr. Brown. He also became the disciple of Mahamahopadhyaya Dr. Ganga Ram, a Maithil Brahmin who did his community proud. Teaching Sanskrit was his family tradition. His knowledge and talent much impressed Narendra Dev.

In those days, the meritorious students of Allahabad would consider joining the Indian Civil Service as not only a matter of pride but also the ultimate proof of their academic process. Narendra Dev also wanted to go to England for the I.C.S. exams. Meanwhile, he along with four other friends came into contact with some revolutionaries and agreed that joining I.C.S. would facilitate Indian takeover of the District administration in view of the impending revolution in India.

In those days, *Sanatana Dharma* adherents considered going abroad or crossing the sea as inauspicious. Narendra Dev's mother did not permit him to travel abroad. Narendra Dev's elder brother, the scholar, Dr. Bhagwan Das had been boycotted from caste, for this, although he fought a case against it in court. Suffice it to say that Narendra Dev, though foreseeing revolution and a budding revolutionary himself, yet could not disobey his mother. His other four friends left for England.

After B.A., Narendra Dev went to Kashi for studying Archaeology. In those days, this subject was taught only at Queen's College, Kashi. From there, Narendra Dev did his M.A. In those days, at Queen's college, Kashi, there was almost a congregation of renowned scholars, both Indian and foreigners. Dr. Venice was the principal. There were other scholars viz. Pandit Keshavdev Shastri, Prof. Norman, Mahamahopadhyaya Shriram Shastri, Pandit Jeevannath Mishra etc. Dr. Venice, Keshav Dev Shastri and Prof. Norman taught Narendra Dev, Sanskrit, Prakrit, Pali and archeology. From the beginning Narendra Dev was more interested in multi-disciplinary fields. He studied Metaphor and Law as well as Archaeology. Diligence and dedication towards studies, both, in the teachers as well as the students, marked the atmosphere.

Dr. Venice possessed profound knowledge of his subject. Beside ancient western philosophy, he was a scholar also of ancient Greek philosophy. After coming to India, he studied in-depth, the Vedic compendium, from the Indian approach and became a top scholar of his time. The Sanskrit works translated by him are viewed with respect even today. He took keen interest in Indian History and was considered an expert of ancient rock-edicts and numismatics.

Both, Dr. Norman and Dr. Venice were teaching Narendra Dev in M.A. second year, so he went to the residence of Dr. Venice in the morning and to Dr. Norman's in the evening, for studies. There was enthusiasm and hard work from both sides.

Dr. Venice taught Epigraphy, Paleography and Numismatics whereas Prof. Norman taught German, French, Pali and Prakrit. Prof. Norman was getting published, “*Attha-katha*”, Budhaghosh’s commentary on *Dhammapeda* and would sometimes recite from it. This was also one of the reasons for Narendra Dev’s interest in Buddhist religion and philosophy followed, by a detailed study.

The following anecdote aptly illustrates the contemporary student-teacher relations and their inclination towards studies. When Dr. Venice took over, as the principal of the Queen’s College, he took an inspection tour of the College. He saw a Pandit teacher sitting against a pillow in one room while the students were wrestling in the class. He called Pandit to his room, to find out the matter. Pandit told him that he had joined the Government College opened by the British rulers as he could not find any other means of livelihood. However, it is improper to impart education in lieu of salary therefore, he gave the student physical education in the class and subject knowledge, at his own residence.

Here, it appears feasible to mention another custom of teaching because of which also, students like Narendra Dev must have benefited greatly. Dr. Venice did not treat the copies of the rock-ediicts, sent by the government, as confidential matter of study and expertise. Instead, he invited collective study and analysis by allowing student participation as group activity.

At the time, in the West, particularly in Germany, France and Italy, there was special interest in ancient Indian History and Culture. The scholars there wrote articles in several languages, published it in reputed magazines there. Dr. Venice would send for it and with his students and associates, subject it to collective analysis, opening wider doors to learning. The historical evolution series of ancient Indian scripts was being studied at Queen’s College, main among them being *Brahmi*, *Kharoshthi* and *Gupta-age* scripts.

In 1947, Sampoornanand requested Narendra Dev to head the *Nagri Lipi Sudhar Samithi*. This author was fortunate to have worked as its member-Secretary. The historical perspective of Narendra Dev proved useful for keeping intact, the form of *Nagri* script, assisting modern technique as well.

‘If he had remained only a teacher’

The founder of Kashi Vidyapeeth, Babu Shivprasad Gupta was Narendra Dev’s classmate and friend and theirs was a unique friendship. Shivprasad was an extreme nationalist so they shared similar ideas and inclinations. Shivprasad founded Kashi Vidyapeeth for national education on Gandhi’s behest. As a staunch supporter of national language and Hindi, he donated ten lakh rupees for the establishment of Kashi Vidyapeeth. For the development of Hindi language, he also ran the Gyan Mandal Press and took out the newspaper ‘*Aaj*’. It is important to note that although the backdrop of Kashi Vidyapeeth was political, Shivprasad conceived it as an academic institution, independent of governmental assistance. He considered this necessary for it, to become center of free expression and a national Vidyapeeth in the true sense. He had seen an example of such an institution during his Japan trip. On his return from Japan he began working independently on the idea.

He was actively involved with Malviya in founding the Kashi Hindu University but distanced himself when the latter accepted governmental funding. Then he started contemplating an independent organisation. With Gandhi’s counsel and Dr. Bhagwandas’s fund, named after his deceased younger brother thus founded the Kashi Vidyapeeth. Gandhiji inaugurated it on February 10, 1921.

On Shivprasad’s request, leaving behind his practice of law that was beginning to flourish and in a way somewhat disappointing himself as well, Narendra Dev joined Kashi Vidyapeeth, as a teacher. Kashi Vidyapeeth was not as famous then, and those who came to teach there then, were not always

eminent scholars in their field but did possess a genuine desire to serve. However, Dr. Bhagwan Das, Acharya Narendra Dev, Dr. Sampoornanand and Shriprakash etc. were the exceptions. Most of the students who joined Kashi Vidyapeeth were those who had either quit, out of nationalist sentiments or been expelled from the government educational institutions for their participation in the national movement for Indian independence. Not all were meritorious, yet the exception were the students who excelled here and became famous in India and abroad, carving a niche for themselves in their field and society. In such an environment, the deep devotion and respect for education in Narendra Dev's heart, found an opportunity to develop. He used this opportunity for intensive study and original thinking. Though he joined Kashi Vidyapeeth as a teacher, later under Dr. Bhagwandas chairmanship, he became the vice-chairman of the Vidyapeeth and then, the Acharya of the Vidyapeeth.

It has been mentioned before that Acharya had been a diligent and meritorious student. Beside Sanskrit, Persian, English, Pali languages, he had also studied the Buddhist philosophy other than the different philosophies of Indian origin. There grew in him, a special comparative insight from the intensive study and deliberations over the western philosophers particularly Sociologists. His elder brother and associate, Dr. Bhagwandas was himself a famous scholar. He had studied well, such subjects as religion, philosophy, Sanskrit and psychology. He also combined the ancient Indian approach of deliberation with the newer one of comparative study. Narendra Dev also benefited from his knowledge.

The name of Acharya Narendra Dev is foremost among such scholars as Dr. Bhagwandas, who made the Vidyapeeth, a reputed educational institution. It was Acharya Narendra Dev who began to teach the history of modern India alongside other known, established and advanced subjects. He was himself, the propounder as well as Acharya of the subject. As his student, Dr.

Kasekar put it, “often, only a few people knew about such a chapter of History and I did not find any, as knowledgeable as him. He continued teaching this subject at the Vidyapeeth. His interest in it was infectious. The reason was that he watched history in making and became a part of it.” The reason for the divine glimpse of an original knowledgeable teacher in his personality was probably because of the way that he taught his subject, making it interesting and inspiring. This is why, despite several other eminent scholars there, Narendra Dev’s students could neither imagine nor wanted to stay at Kashi Vidyapeeth, without him being there. It seems relevant to mention here, as proof thereof, how things transpired when, on his father’s death there, Narendra Dev left for Faizabad. Saddened by Acharya Narendra Dev’s absence from Kashi Vidyapeeth, his students debated quitting the institution itself. However, Acharya returned to Kashi Vidyapeeth.

Till his father’s death, Narendra Dev had worked without pay. His father had taught the lesson that even while engaged in social service and philanthropy, one should still take care of one’s family. Narendra Dev’s father was himself, a charitable man, incurring heavy expenses on social service and philanthropy. Narendra Dev however, went a step further and would spend most of his income in social service. He bought bio-chemic medicines to distribute them for free, to the poor patients. He would aid a lot of students. While he worked at the Vidyapeeth without pay, his father bore his expenses. After his father’s death Narendra Dev, for sustenance, accepted a monthly salary of Rs.150. Considering his needs, Kashi Vidyapeeth requested him to raise the amount but he declined since other teachers were also getting that much only.

The frame of entire India could fit in Narendra Dev’s comprehensive knowledge of History. The image he portrayed was not that which the foreign historians were distorting and fabricating for selfish ends. It was one of contemporary

developing India which was capable of giving a new message to the world while safeguarding its own glorious past. Simultaneously, he also studied the history of the rise and fall of other countries of Asia. He saw History as the footsteps of dynamic forces. This was the reason for his interest in politics, with the purpose of changing society, empowering it and making it dynamic.

Besides teaching History, his interest kept increasing, in the study of Archaeology, Buddhist philosophy and thought. Due to the knowledge of languages from his student days, Narendra Dev could study and gather new material on Buddhist religion and philosophy, from not only the original scriptures in Pali, Prakrit and Sanskrit but also those written in French language. On this basis, he later wrote a famous book titled "*Bodh Dharma Darshan*" and encouraged Rahul Sankrityayan to study it. Rahul came in contact, with Acharya, during 1927-28 and was then known as Baba Ram Udaar Das.

Staying at Narendra Dev's house, with his assistance, Rahul translated "*Abhidharma Kosha*" from Tibetan language to Sanskrit. It was on Acharya's request that Kashi Vidyapeeth published "*Abhidharma Kosha*" and Babu Shivprasad Gupta, "*Tripitaka*". While there, to broaden his study-base, he studied in-depth, the Upanishads and admitted that the thinking and practice of the Upanishads is among the gems of the world. Upanishads are the original source of the specialized schools of thought that have originated in India.

Acharya was particularly inclined towards Buddhist philosophy, a probable reason being that he was deeply influenced by the life and times, personality and thoughts of Lord Buddha. Call it self-realisation or the inherent characteristic of persona that it finds its image in another's personality or vision.

Whether sick, in jail or teaching at the Vidyapeeth, Acharya utilized his time in self-study and mostly, it involved in-depth understanding of Buddhist religion. Buddhist literature was

available in Tibetan but not much, in Indian languages and that too in Hindi. Acharya wanted that the summary of Buddhist philosophy and the original scriptures of Buddhist religion be made available in Hindi. One reason was his respect for Hindi language but another compelling one was his belief that making the *shraman* culture of Buddhism, the moral basis of socialism could give birth to a new society in India, for this, he desired that the material essential for the study of Buddhist religion – philosophy be available in Hindi.

Narendra Dev knew of several researched essays and authentic epics and wanted that, even if not in original form, it should still be authentically translated into an abridged version. This is why, he prepared in Hindi language, the book, “*Bodh Dharma Aur Darshan*.” Comprising five-volumes and twenty-chapters, it is a detailed analysis of the practice of *sthevirvad*, the general beliefs of Buddhist philosophy, *Pratitya*, *Sanyuct pedved*, *Chanhongvad*, *anishwarvad*, *karmavad*, *nirvana*, detailed introduction and comparison of *Vaibhashik*, *Sautentrik*, *Vigyanvad* and *Shoonyavad* in Buddhist philosophy.

Acharya Narendra Dev had a lucid and interesting way of presenting the lessons before the students. His teaching method was unique and he had the extraordinary ability to hold the attention of his students. By his learning and thinking, he would render the most complex topic simple. As an ideal teacher, he considered it his duty to present both sides of the issue at hand, before the students as well as the solution. He believed it the pious duty of a teacher to arouse the intellectual wisdom in students. As a teacher, he did not impose his views on others, but instead only prompted his students to the logical conclusions. In this way, the teacher and the students pursued similar direction of thoughts.

The affection and respect that Narendra Dev received from such teachers as Dr. Venice and the way that they coached a curious and studious person like Narendra Dev, was the

teacher's debt that he made efforts to pay back while at Kashi Vidyapeeth and outside too, the doors of his home were always open for the students and he always found time for teaching.

Prof. Mukut Bihari Lal has expressed in beautiful words, Narendra Dev's nature as a teacher, "he possessed full knowledge of the history of several countries and philosophies of many ages. Whichever subject he taught, he would present it in such a clear, interesting and lucid way that the students could easily grasp the lesson. While teaching history, he would present the broad events of the past and the historical figures, in lively, realistic way. He would draw word-picture of the history of the national movement of India against the background of the struggles and economic situation of Asia. While lecturing about the different freedom struggles in Asian countries, Narendra Dev would be so overtaken by nationalistic fervour and his lecture would become so magical that his audience would become motivated to serve the nation too, beside gaining knowledge. When he discussed the Indian revolutionary movement and narrated of the sacrifices of the courageous revolutionaries, his students felt as if a real revolutionary himself was addressing them. While lecturing on Buddhist religion and philosophy he would draw a word-picture of the glorious personality of Buddha, religiously analyse the different sects of Buddhism making an authentic and attractive presentation of excerpts from Arya Shanti Dev's famous scripture '*Bodhicharyavtar*', teach the students a lesson about the importance of serving all miserable beings."

The text from *Bodhicharyavtar* was dear to him and which he recited to students. It may be summarized thus. "When the entire universe is suffering from miseries then, what will I alone gain from this bland salvation, those who themselves suffer thousands of miseries of the beings and wish to alleviate that, considering this, their good fortune should never give up their equanimity."

Acharya was not merely a teacher but also a capable manager and a man with the strength of convictions. He would not accommodate vested interests. His sense of fair-play stood rock-solid by his modesty. Once, while working as the vice-chancellor of Lucknow University, he declined a request from the then Chancellor, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, since, accepting it would have been against his principles and justice. He had agreed on its face value but while processing the request, Acharya found it to be against regulations and rejected it. Naidu accepted his decision, without rancour, the reason being the idealism on both sides.

As the Head of Kashi Vidyapeeth, he would monitor the teaching arrangements of students and office work too. He would take on still more workload than he assigned to other teachers. He did not like mismanagement and would enforce discipline strictly. In this context, a sanskrit saying fits him aptly, "*Vajradapi Kathorani, Kusum Komlani che*", Harder than *vajra*, in discipline, and softer than a flower, in behaviour. With such an attitude, under Narendra Dev's care, administration ran smoothly.

As a teacher, Narendra Dev believed in the ashram culture where an Acharya would be the guru of his students as well as the father figure for the student community. Acharya had turned Kashi Vidyapeeth into one big family. Though a teacher, Acharya behaved as a friend to the students and staff. He considered it the foremost duty of a teacher like himself, to guide them constantly, with affection. He shared his knowledge and affection and received respect from all, for his good conduct and character. During his stay at the Kashi Vidyapeeth hostel, Acharya Narendra Dev tutored the resident students and teachers, inspiring them with verses from the *Bodhicharyavtar* and the songs of the revolutionaries.

Narendra Dev also participated in celebrations by the students. Once, the students of Kashi Vidyapeeth decided to

stage a drama on the occasion of its annual function, Babu Shivprasad Gupta did not approve of this but Narendra Dev and Shriprakash not only supported the idea but also decided to participate in the *mushaira* and poets conference, on the occasion. When Babu Shivprasad Gupta came to know of this, he attired himself in a Japanese costume and sporting long whiskers like the Chinese, came on the platform. He was addressed as Mister Motor and chosen to preside over the poets assembly. Acharya Narendra Dev was addressed as Mirza Horse cart. At the time, Narendra Dev laughingly remarked, “who gives importance to a horse-cart over a motor? Who will respect Mirza before Mister?”

Acharya was a teacher at heart so after completing B.A., he chose to pursue research in ancient history, then study law. He fared considerably well in his career as an advocate. Yet when the opportunity came to teach at the Kashi Vidyapeeth, he immediately quit practice of law, to serve at Kashi Vidyapeeth as an unpaid teacher. As he confessed himself, “In my life, there have always been two pursuits. If I can follow both at once, I am rewarded. I did get this convenience at Kashi Vidyapeeth which is why the time spent serving the Vidyapeeth, is the best part of my life.”

Sampoornanand repeats what he once said to Narendra Dev, whatever you write will be your exemplary contribution to the country and the literary society. From whichever angle and however intensively, Narendra Dev’s self-study and teaching is viewed, it becomes apparent that if he had remained a teacher, he would have made exemplary contributions to the Indian school of thought, Indian system of education and the seekers of knowledge in the society. It is still a matter of regret for those who knew him well that if his body had kept healthy and not been revenged by diseases, politics had not diverted his time and attention then his contribution to the Indian treasure trove of knowledge would have been more enriching.

Education and Educationist

The title is meaningful, for, Narendra Dev taught at Kashi Vidyapeeth for several years and was considered an ideal teacher. He continued to teach even as the vice-chancellor of Lucknow and Kashi universities. It is, therefore, relevant to know his role as an academician and his views on education. Although Narendra Dev's role as a teacher has already been written about, in the previous chapter, a few instances as a reference to context are presented here.

Narendra Dev was appointed as the chairperson of the Education commission, set-up by the U.P. government. His views on education find mention in his speeches, which are quite significant because of his ideals and ideas. Narendra Dev considered education inseparable from life-goals and therefore, emphasised setting-up a life-goal before taking up academic pursuits as the means to achieve it. This is a philosophical issue, faced by the scholars associated with the education system. Dr. Sampoornanand and Dr. Radhakrishnan emphasised that well-laid-out individual life-goal is essential to maintain order in Indian society and national prosperity. Education cannot benefit a person in the absence of a clear life-goal. Narendra Dev was of the opinion that we have lost the purpose of life at present but can get rid of disorder if we firmly set clear and definite goals. He clarified that this goal cannot be taken to mean salvation in personal life. In this, he supported Lord Buddha and Mahatma Gandhi viewing the latter's self-sacrifice as the best example.

The life-goal of Narendra Dev was to produce creative energy to actualise the great national effort needed for the material and cultural progress of the country. He believed that

this creative power will make the educated conscious about their social duties and moral obligations. He considered this, a national obligation. He saw the potential of great intellectual effort in this creative power by which one can get rid of dogmas, immorality, selfishness, violence and revenge. It will arouse nobler emotions and discretion will prevail in society. He perceived education as the means for socio-cultural empowerment.

In the modern age, the social objectives of education cannot be ignored. This is why, Narendra Dev favoured an extensive and dynamic approach in education instead of the classical and traditional one. He could foresee the dynamic pace of social change and how its very foundation was changing on the basis of scientific findings. He emphasised the need for overhauling the collective intellect of Indians to enable them especially the educated ones, to meet the requirements of the dynamic world. He wanted a liberal education system as per the social requirements and aspirations. He desired to instill, in his students, the values essential for the progress of the modern world. Realizing the significance of science and mechanization, he favoured its utilization for social rather than “petty selfish concerns.”

Narendra Dev believed in meaningful education as an instrument for the moral upliftment of the society. He was of the view that knowledge acquired from education, should be employed to strengthen the society. He regretted that “beside beneficial work, science is also being misused for building destructive armaments. Even the developing social sciences are being misused to psychologically influence the ideas and behaviour of the public.” He reasoned that this degradation is natural, in the absence of true education, with social and moral values, in the society. He held the government and the educational institutions responsible for this.

Acharya observed, “greed for power has blinded us to reason. We are not considering the purity of means and for vested interests, can adopt any method, no matter how petty or

inappropriate it is. The entire population is becoming immoral since the supremacy of religion is fast eroding and old customs and beliefs have faded away before the new ones could be entrenched firmly. This negative approach to life is definitely harmful. If it is not amended in time and those social and spiritual values that can save the world do not become predominant, the world will face a severe crisis.”

As mentioned earlier, Acharya was not in favour of uprooting the ancient value system. He wanted scientists, politicians and academicians to understand their obligations towards the society and work in the light of those moral values, which can sustain social order. His social concerns were extensive and liberal. He recognised the importance of many ancient values whose realism and utility had been proved historically. However, he also emphasized that the value-system should support the needs and aspirations of modern age. He called it, *era-values, yug-dharma*, which, in his view, was and should remain dynamic. This is essential for national progress.

While discussing the needs and objectives of education, on one hand, he would talk about the ideals and the objectives of the educationists and education-managers as well as the shortcomings in the system of education. On the other hand, he also kept in mind, the community whose responsibility is no less, in the field of educational progress. A worried Narendra Dev observed, “the public is dwelling in ignorance and poverty. Although India is an agriculture-based country, the food-production is quite inadequate for the growing population. We are unable to fulfill the basic needs of the population. The mortality rate is high. The public lives in squalor but is ignorant, aggressive.” In view of this image of the general public, he clearly was of the opinion that the purpose of education was more than just to produce able men.

Narendra Dev asserted that the primary purpose of education is also to ignite the hope of upliftment in life, of the downtrodden.

It should create among the members of society an intense awareness of the need to uplift the weaker sections, foster amity and compassion, eliminate caste differences and transcend regionalism. Through the medium of education, confidence-building measures for international peace and goodwill and fostering faith in the democratic way of life, should also be the objective of education.

After his return from Thailand, Narendra Dev frequently asserted that a national structure of education should be ensured. When Narendra Dev spoke about over-hauling the educational system, the idea of redefining the goals was absolutely clear to him. For this, he considered as capable, only those who had availed the full opportunity to study intensively, the contemporary problems and understand the new social trends. In this regard, Narendra Dev considered bare academic knowledge not only meaningless but also worthless. He favoured freedom of principles, in the field of education.

In ancient India, administration had no control over education. It was regulated for the society which took interest in making arrangements for it. All this changed during the British rule. During foreign rule, administration was distinct from the society and it held the reins of education. Freedom of principles was in name only, therefore, the society and educational institutions were separated. Gradually, society distanced itself and the educational institutions became totally dependent on the administration. Consequently, the interest of people in education, waned. The teacher was no longer revered in the society but held a position like any other official. Then salary, meager as it was came to determine the social status. In such a situation, the deterioration in education, due under foreign rule, did take place.

In the ancient system i.e. the Indian tradition, the teacher occupied a high position which he did not get easily, therefore, he safeguarded its dignity well. He had to prove his usefulness in the society on the basis of his knowledge and his work-area was

not limited to the school only. This was what Acharya wanted. As he observed, “a teacher will have to prove his utility in society first, only then can he get acceptance in the society. His work-area should not be limited only to the school but extend to all areas of national life.” He gives an example to clarify his view further, commenting thus, “for example, he should also be engaged in extra-curricular activities and undertake the job of educating the common man. He should be a man of education, character and compassion. There should be no differentiation between preaching and practice. He should respect the personality of the student and attempt to reach out, understand his needs and difficulties.”

If Acharya’s beliefs, his opinions are viewed in the context of today’s adult education programs and the need of intellectual democracy, then, the tangled-up problems and its complexities would be exposed and today’s teacher-community would be forced to introspect. Narendra Dev is not merely a preacher, when drawing attention to the duties of those who work as teachers or want to discharge those duties. He also pointed out, those several concerns and relations as should exist not just between the teachers and the students but also, the society. He asserts that it is the teacher’s duty to build the character of the students, promote growth of his personality and foster democratic sentiments. He also elaborates the process by which all this is possible.

Narendra Dev emphasises that between the teacher and the students, there should be “free exchange of ideas and the teacher should not impose their beliefs on the students but should present before them, different views on the issue under consideration. As far as possible, the power of self-restraint inherent in human nature and which promotes self-discipline, should be encouraged. Those teachers who only convey information but do not help the students formulate ideas and character, are not capable teachers. A true teacher is the

recipient of his student's respect and affection and it is quite easy for him, to command discipline. It is wrong to say that today's generation lacks such students but it is unfortunate that in the present collective production series, not many teachers have that calibre. Unfortunately, both, the politicians and the teachers have not been able to mould themselves with time. A sad indifference towards their duties and responsibilities is visible in them." Acharya could make this comment because he himself actually had the good fortune to have good teachers and his remarks should be considered, a grateful tribute to his own teachers.

Working as an ideal teacher, Narendra Dev had not only been able to become an educationist but with mutual respect, had also won the admiration and affection of his students. Comprehending well, the problems of teachers and the education system, he would delve into it and extracting the root causes, present them analytically. His concentration in studying anthropology, sociology and psychology translated into good grasp upon root causes.

Highlighting the anomalies of a teacher's life, Narendra Dev observed, "there is nothing to encourage a teacher to dedicate his best, to the society. Not many are suitable for this profession, generally, teachers have to work under uninspiring and adverse circumstances. Only a small percentage of people, sincere to their profession and undeterred by the difficulties, live a life of selflessness. Usually, a teacher's life is devoid of comforts. He does not feel secure, the wages are insufficient, he does not get suitable returns for his efforts and usually he does not even get a respectable status in the society. (It is not known as to what would have been Acharya's thoughts about today's situation). The work conditions are not always satisfactory. In the institutions well-arranged libraries may not be there, resources and accommodation may be lacking. Bigger class makes it difficult for him to establish personal contact with all his students." Some

of these problems have been tackled but the conditions continue to get worse. Yet, Acharya's analysis is relevant even today.

Education is deeply entrenched in politics. Frequently, it is observed that in the playfield of politics, different political parties take political stands. These decisions are hardly ever analysed on the basis of intellectual exchange of ideas or the interests of the country and the society. Instead, slogans rent the air, shaking the very foundations of the educational institutions. The stooges of various political parties do not hesitate to barge inside schools, universities and other educational institutions to disrupt the ongoing studies, close down the offices and vitiate the atmosphere. This happens also because several, among the teachers, become the active workers or leaders of various political parties.

Acharya again draws attention to the duties of the teachers, expressing his view on the topic thus, "It is the duty of a teacher to establish high social ideals in the students mind. A teacher can only be useful when there is intellectual honesty in him, and this is only possible when he has intellectual freedom. This freedom is a valuable asset of a teacher. He should have unrestricted freedom in principle, to express his views on any subject. A true teacher cannot remain indifferent towards the controversial issues of his times. The feeling of apathy or worse, the desire to conceal his ideas for fear of officials, is against his dignity. However, it should be remembered that no matter what his ideas are, he should not be permitted to become a publicist or orator on platform." So that this observation may not be misconstrued, Narendra Dev again clarified that it was not his intention to stop any teacher from participating in his country's social and political movements. He made this clear, saying, "there are also inherent dangers in the principle that I am propounding. Some teachers will abuse this privilege and will not be able to protect the standard of discussion in principle, they will begin initiating their students in particular principles but for fear of its being abused, liberty should not be abducted. Suitable action can be taken for preventing repetition (in case) of violation."

An example is being presented here to illustrate as to how the teachers may rise above partisan politics, to make the welfare of the students, their main concern. In his capacity as the vice-chancellor, Narendra Dev would donate forty per cent of his income to the students fund that he had established during his vice-chancellorship. However, it was not necessary that he should look to the fund only, when the occasion came, to help a student. He would offer financial assistance from his own pocket too.

Once Narendra Dev financially helped a student with a hundred-rupee note, while accepting it, the student found it proper to inform Narendra Dev about his own political leanings and said, "Acharya, I am a communist." Perhaps he said so because Acharya fiercely opposed and was a bitter critic of Stalinism. Acharya retorted, "I have helped a student. This aid has no relation to his political views."

Acharya explains easily, a complex aspect of education when he observes, "today education system is divided at several levels, will remain so, if, it is to be made universally beneficial and contemporary. Not all students can be eligible for or desirous of university level or other high standard education. There may also be some who feel the need of or be compelled by circumstances to attend, after secondary level education, some college or institution established for technical or specialised education. Therefore, education is divided into parts from the view of order. Usually, education is visible in fragmented form but it is actually not such a commodity. Acharya saw and knew its macro-form. He believed that this stream, once in flow, is integral and inseparable from its previous form. It is also multi-dimensional therefore, the values of the primary stage also influence the higher-level education. The foundation of the causes and ideals of the highest standard can only be laid at the primary stage.

According to Narendra Dev, the different stages of education are linked together. If the standard at the highest stage

is declining then its reason is that the standard at the lower levels is not as it should be. Here, it's important to note that he made clear, the composite nature of education and did not favour the tendency to view separately, the origin and development of the stream.

Shankar evolved into Shankaracharya. It would be credit worthy for the managers of education system to adopt a comprehensive view, in advancement of the education system. Pointing towards the illimitable expanse of the horizons of knowledge, Narendra Dev exhorts the students and the teachers to explore the same. He emphasises upon the need to develop the capability to view the entire horizon. He believes that to view it in its entirety, from one end to another and to assimilate it, the support of science and technology will have to be taken. Simultaneously “reputed culture and general education on a broad base” will have to be maintained in the background of study-teaching of all specialised education. Narendra Dev did believe that without this background, a student may still become capable of earning a livelihood by becoming qualified in some particular craft but this would not adequately prepare him for life.

Narendra Dev considered adequate intellectual progress necessary, to handle the new knowledge explosion due to the advancement in the field of science, in the modern era. It seems that Acharya was always apprehensive that without intellectual progress, this new knowledge would not be handled well or utilized properly or prove beneficial for the society. The importance of science lies in social welfare and Narendra Dev's suspicions were not unfounded, considering the contemporary national struggle for freedom, importance of world peace and the daily deteriorating international goodwill.

On one hand, accepting the importance of science and technology, Narendra Dev wanted to see it in a form beneficial for the society. On the other hand, for its development, for further

progress, he wanted to raise the standard of general education so that it proves helpful in eradicating the very causes of these tensions and conflicts. He believed the main element of extreme nationalistic emotion in modern education to be unfortunate but his view was an integrated one. Narendra Dev was not satisfied with how things were. He knew that these conflicts cannot be eradicated only by educational experiments. "The reasons are complex. They are not only psychological but also political and economic. Until all these causes are addressed, the conflict cannot be resolved. Education can only give rise to the feeling of respect for other nations and provide advice on how the social behaviour can be regulated to some extent."

The national character of education has been discussed above. Narendra Dev pondered deeply, over its practical aspects and consequently, the opinion that he gave was very objective, fearless and in keeping with the view that the unity of the country is the supreme issue. Before exploring the issue any further, it would be feasible to view his proposal. Narendra Dev remarked, "In my view the question needs to be reconsidered. I am of the opinion that the national language should be the medium of education in the universities." At the Vice-Chancellor's conference, called by the Education Department in 1949, (at the time, Acharya was the Vice-Chancellor of Lucknow University), came the statement, "I had expressed this view but it could not get enough support then. A decision in favour of the regional language will definitely encourage narrow-mindedness in education. The Inter-University Board is emphasising upon the need for uniformity in the education standards so that it would be easier for the students to migrate from one university to another. However, if the regional language is accepted as the medium of education in the universities, then this would be utterly impossible. Teachers would also be appointed on the regional basis only and that would quite limit the area of selection. With this work-procedure, deterioration in the standard of education as well as promotion of regionalism is inevitable."

To express his anguish and draw a clear picture of future regression, Narendra Dev cites the example of the efforts of UNESCO, observing thus, “when, at UNESCO, the international migration of students on a large-scale, is under consideration, and plans are being made for getting international cooperation in the field of education, we are still thinking along regional lines and have not been able to make it an all-India basis. Until we strengthen the cultural relations between the different regions and prepare a large number of people to express their best ideas in a simple language, national unity cannot be established in India. If we make the national language, the medium of education, in each university, this objective can be successfully achieved. This process is slow in speed and it is also necessary to follow such a policy but if we do not decide this now, then there can never be, a general medium of education in the universities. I want to reassure you that I am not putting forth, this proposal, inspired by a view, biased in favour of Hindi language. If any other Indian language gets universal acceptance, I will immediately get that one accepted. My only wish is to work for national unity.”

Narendra Dev said this, at the conclusion of his speech to emphasise the basic purpose of the speech. It is noteworthy that he did not even mention English language. Beside promoting national unity, he also wanted to rid the Indian culture and education system of the slave-mentality.

Entry into politics

Narendra Dev's nature was such that he would not have ventured into politics but the situations play an important role in the development of personality, character and inclinations and sometimes they change the entire way of life. In view of Narendra Dev's family background, heritage and the influence of education, it is easier to imagine him successfully earning money by becoming an ethical, brilliant and successful lawyer like his father. The people who influenced his childhood were all followers of *Sanatana Dharma*, basically liberal in outlook. Even those who attracted his attention were also people of religious and spiritual inclinations. In all, there was little possibility of his venturing out of this environment. Even when he reached the Lucknow session of the Congress, with his father, it was only as a kid spectator. He came to know about even such great men as Ranade, Tilak and Romesh Dutt, only through his father.

Banaras and Allahabad were the centres of education outside Faizabad. Mrs. Annie Besant's Central Hindu College and Theosophical Society had became the focus of attention among rich and influential people. It is not surprising, therefore, that Narendra Dev's desire to go to the Central Hindu College, for studies, grew strong. If he had gone there, to study, it cannot be rightfully claimed that he would not have entered active politics but the greater possibility in the natural circumstances was that he would have proved a worthy heir to his father, as a good lawyer in Faizabad. It is another matter if, like several other contemporary Congress leaders, he had entered Congress as a lawyer only and then, sacrificed as much or more, for his country. But this did not or could not happen.

With his Faizabad friends, Narendra Dev went to the Central College in Allahabad. Before getting admitted to the Hindu Boarding House, he stayed for a few days with the famous Hindi writer, Pandit Balkrishna Bhatt and was introduced to his relatives as well. Pandit Janardan Bhatt, son of Balkrishna Bhatt, recounts that even at that time, Narendra Dev was an innocent and humble person.

At the Hindu Boarding House, Narendra Dev's ideas found the fertile soil of social consciousness. The victory of Japan, in the Russo-Japanese wars, greatly influenced the contemporary youth who had greater awareness of their dignity. Being Asian, they fervently sought a clearer identity and dignity for India. Narendra Dev was one such youth.

In those days, the British rulers, to strengthen and sustain their sovereignty, had started sowing the poison-seeds of communal conflicts, between the Hindus and the Muslims. *Bang-bhang* partition of Bengal was an active British move in this direction, however, this only strengthened the anti-British sentiment not only among the Bengalis but the youth all over India and they protested vehemently. Groups of youth organised for the cause and they mushroomed everywhere. Ways were being explored, to oust the British from India, by armed revolution, on the lines of Japan. Hindu Boarding House had become a centre for youth with such aggressive ideas and beliefs. Narendra Dev also became an extremist. That he barely stopped short, of becoming a conspirator, is not to take his role lightly.

Narendra Dev's association with the conspirators continued and he actively assisted them. Congress was already on the scene. With no need to delve into the details of its history, suffice it to say that Congress became bifurcated over the issue of extremism. As a result, two options for leadership presented themselves before the youth. One were the leaders, who supported projecting their demands by the constitutional methods, on the basis of boycott threat and action. The opposite side

believed that the imperialist forces of Europe could be opposed forcefully and preparations should be made accordingly. Tilak, Vipin Chandra Pal, Arvind Ghosh and Lala Lajpat Rai were the vocal leaders of this view. Narendra Dev was influenced by his ideas and accepted Tilak as his leader. This lasted until Gandhiji established his own authority.

Narendra Dev's father, Babu Baldev Prasad was not only tolerant towards Congress, but also harboured deep respect for it. Narendra Dev attended the Calcutta session of the Congress in 1907. The Congress leaders of extreme nationalist views had already made a declaration about the use of indigenous products, boycott of foreign goods, programme of awakening public consciousness, strengthening public institutions and complete autonomy as the ultimate goal. In support of this, some newspapers were also being published, of which, the Calcutta daily, '*Vande Mataram*' will always be remembered with respect.

On his return from Calcutta, Narendra Dev also took an oath to always use Swadeshi and he adhered to it all his life. After Calcutta, Narendra Dev got the chance to almost immediately hear Tilak's speech again at Allahabad itself. Tilak visited Allahabad on his way back from Calcutta. The chain of visits to Allahabad by the leaders of the extremist group, did not stop here. Along came Vipin Chandra Pal and Lala Lajpat Rai. Their speeches put to logic and channelised the turbulent thoughts of Narendra Dev into a pre-determined direction.

The speeches of prominent young leaders were not the only things to attract the youths but abundant literature to support their ideas was also available, some translated from English and some independently. Among the translated work was Edwin Arnold's 'Light of Asia' and the independent work was mainly in Bengali and Marathi languages. Although Hindi was progressing along with these two languages yet the importance of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's novels, written in Bengali language was

immense. Narendra Dev also read Rameshchandra Dutt's and Bankimbabu's novels, in Bengali language.

Lala Hardayal was an extremist leader who had quit his studies abroad though circumstances and the prevailing atmosphere did make a lawyer out of him. He achieved distinction in the field soon after he started practicing law in Faizabad. The philanthropic aspect of Narendra Dev's personality had strengthened with the contribution of his audience, teachers and Swami Ramtirth. He could easily win over his professional opponents and earn their respect and goodwill. It is said that Narendra Dev, the young lawyer compelled a self-opinionated British judge, to shed his preconceived notions when Narendra Dev argued on behalf of his father for his client. The much impressed judge decided the case afresh after the hearing. Narendra Dev spent a large part of his increased earnings on social service.

To satisfy his intellectual cravings, Narendra Dev studied about Marxism and Russian revolution. His public life formally began when he got elected to Faizabad Municipal Corporation. However, his political career took off only when he opened a branch of Annie Besant's Home Rule League at Faizabad. Narendra Dev came in contact with Jawaharlal Nehru who was also the provincial secretary of the league. Apart from the common year of birth, 1889, they both were advocates and so, a lifelong friendship was founded.

Jawaharlal Nehru inspired Narendra Dev to join the Kashi Vidyapeeth his political work field. Jawaharlal Nehru visited Faizabad in connection with the former movement and extended Babu Shivprasad Gupta's invitation to Narendra Dev which the latter accepted though hesitantly. The institution was instrumental in honing his intellectual skills, his prowess as a freedom fighter, socialist thinker and a Buddhist philosopher. It was at Kashi Vidyapeeth that Narendra Dev met Gandhiji and won his trust and affection. Gandhiji considered him good for the Congress and the nation and proposed his name as Congress President, though

Sardar Patel proposed the name of Rajendra Prasad instead. Gandhi's emissary, Pandit Govind Vallabh Pant could not contact him in time. Coming to know about the incident later, he was dismayed at having had to shoulder the responsibility against Gandhi's wish (223 Mukut Biharilal).

Narendra Dev maintained a low profile while participating in the Congress sessions at Faizabad. However, he began voicing his thoughts while working as a member, provincial Congress Committee, at Kashi Vidyapeeth. In the provincial Congress Committee, there was a provision for a representative from the Kashi Vidyapeeth, the responsibility Narendra Dev discharged well, for several years. As a disciplined member of the Congress party, Narendra Dev abided by its decisions and voiced his difference of opinion not verbally so much as by votes. It can be alleged that Narendra Dev led the Congress socialist party while still a Congress party member, thus playing an active role in distancing people from the main stream but this was not so.

The establishment of the Congress Socialist Party and its separation from the Congress makes for interesting history which shows how, the freedom of expression can be promoted in a disciplined manner with focus on the welfare of the country and the society. However, it is true that Narendra Dev was internationally recognised as an independent socialist, for leading the Congress Socialist Party and the concept of a democratic society.

The Congress Socialist Party was founded in 1934 but separated from Congress only in March 1948. As a Congress member for these fourteen years and even before, Narendra Dev maintained discipline, and morality, emphasising on the purity of means. Gandhiji also wanted this conduct in politics. While alive and in leadership, he had raised the ideals of the Congress and its members, to a spiritual level. The influence of Gandhi's political objectives and ideas could be glimpsed in Narendra Dev's written and oral speeches.

Excerpts from Narendra Dev's speech in the assembly of Uttar Pradesh (the United Provinces then) on the occasion of Gandhi's death, illustrate not only the highest esteem in which he held Gandhiji but also his ideals. He observes, "Mahatma Gandhi established a unique and delicate balance with the ancient culture of India, by giving a modern form to its ancient educational system, by referring it, according to the contemporary needs, with inputs of new social and spiritual values of modern age. He represented truly the aspirations and objectives of this modern age. This is why he was not only a great personality of India but a great man of the world."

Narendra Dev found Gandhi's concept of nationalism complete and permeated with liberalism. He was large-hearted man, who raised the standard of general living of the common man, instilling dignity in them. Raising the standard of living of the common man Narendra Dev talked about was an extension of the movement that transcended the boundaries of institutions and organisations, to include one and all. Acharya favoured and always practiced the moral discipline with which Gandhiji had accomplished the task. Narendra Dev was one of those few in politics, who rose above selfish interests, to work for others, the country, the society, the entire humanity. It can easily be imagined how great a person he would have been, to work on such a large canvas.

Those working under the leadership of Gandhiji were known in the society as the non-cooperating elements. The movements planned by Gandhiji, from time-to-time, were known as the non-cooperation movements since their basic aim was to oppose the British rule by non-cooperating with the foreign government in India. The public opinion was being moulded against the British rule but the method that Gandhiji adopted, to organise it so, was a unique one, where the repercussions were indirect. The British mills in England suffered as did the people running the administration in India, from England. India based British viceroy

and the other high-ranking officials under him, were being driven by frustration to cruelty. This resulted in public unrest which Gandhiji began channelising and the British did not know how to counter this strategy.

After initial doubts, all pro-active leaders of the country joined Gandhiji in the non-cooperation movement, voluntarily suffering the governmental atrocities. The details of these movements have been skipped here, to save on their causal analysis. Suffice it to say that Narendra Dev was a socialist leader of extremist views in active politics, who believed in the Gandhian moral values and was committed to promoting them. Although the Congress Socialist Party was formed in 1934, Narendra Dev and his colleagues had their leanings towards it since 1926.

Dr. Sampoornanand wrote a book, 'the outline of Socialism' and together with Narendra Dev, evolved a socialist solution to address the issues of the provincial farmers. A socialist at heart, Narendra Dev expressed his views from the Congress Socialist Party's platform, Gandhiji who was also committed to serving the poor, did not have any ground to oppose this in principle but there was no unanimous stand also. Gandhiji believed the socialist agenda and publicity, to be a hasty step and called a meeting of the prominent leaders of the Congress Socialist Party, including Narendra Dev, at the Sabarmati Ashram, for better coordination.

Jawaharlal Nehru included Narendra Dev, Jaiprakash Narain and Achyut Patwardhan as the executive members in the Congress, when he became its President in 1936. He emphasised on the representation of the labourers and the farmers in the Congress Committees. The inclusion of Narendra Dev and Jaiprakash Narain as Congress Executive members does not indicate that the Congress and its President were adopting the Socialist agenda, for, the Congress Socialist Party was not an independent entity and only Congress members could join it. It was for this reason that Jawaharlal Nehru cold-shouldered them

and Congress reverted to its original agenda when Sardar Patel, Rajendra Prasad and Rajaji tendered their resignations from the executive following difference of opinion with the Socialists. The time was not ripe then for the socialists to carve an identity of their own, independent of Congress, since despite the ideological differences, for political activism, conflict – strategies etc., they did believe in the leadership of Gandhiji.

His friends' circle

Narendra Dev possessed a friendly nature. He belonged to the entire society and believed in human dignity. He empathised with human suffering and remained untouched by the communalisation and casteism factors. His mind and soul transcended national boundaries for the human values beneficial for the society, to which he gave far more importance than scientific advancements. Such a one, who considered the entire universe permeated with a single life force, could not be restricted by the definition of enemy or friend. However, it would not be irrelevant to mention here, a few close friends of his, from the society into which he was born and died.

Among the friends from his student-days, some noteworthy names are those of Pandit Gopinath, Shivprasad Gupta, Hiralal Khanna, Shachindranath Sanyal and Hariramchandra Divakar. In a memoir, Narendra Dev has cited similar wavelength as the reason for his friendship with Hiralal Khanna. Born into a poor family, Hiralal had to face hardships in the childhood itself when his father died, yet by dint of hard work he grew up to be a dignified and courageous individual. At Myor Central College, he met Narendra Dev and their scholarly pursuits brought them closer, to form a friendship, for life. Both were devoted to the promotion of Hindi language and remained steadfast advocates of freedom. Khanna reached the position of the Principal of VNSD College at Kanpur. His white moustache and turban were conspicuous in his personality and he was a frank and forthright person.

Narendra Dev's friendship with Shivprasad at Myor Central College strengthened during their service of the nation.

In 1913-14, he started on a world tour. Anapoornanand, the brother of Sampoornanand accompanied him on a visit abroad. While checking the passport, officials in Egypt pronounced his name as Shivprasad Jupta since, in their language, 'g' was pronounced as 'j' only. Shivprasad was much cut-up about his name being mispronounced thus and dismayed as well, at repeatedly being called as 'Jupta'. This incident may seem irrelevant but it highlights an important aspect of the personality of Shivprasad. He liked to work in a dignified manner and knew how to accord respect to others too. Be it language, expression, conduct or behaviour, to set a standard or respect the one already existing was his nature.

It is unfortunate that nobody wrote Shivprasad Gupta's biography as it would have been not only educational but also interesting. It would have highlighted the political history of Kashi too. By combining Narendra Dev's cooperation with the establishment of the Vidyapeeth, Shivprasad had really made it an institution in a true sense, whose influence was lasting. This institution produced several famous great men. Narendra Dev and Shivprasad would often jest and their friends cherished the memories of such incidents. Shivprasad was a serious, sober person, but when he visited Pandit Motilal's house, the latter would be heard telling him, "Mr. Gupta, please take a few chairs." Their colleagues would find it hard to suppress their laughter since Shivprasad was rather fat.

Mukut Bihari Lal has mentioned in his book, an incident about Narendra Dev. On the occasion of the annual function of Kashi Vidyapeeth, the students organised a drama there. When Shivprasad arrived on the platform in a Chinese costume, people there called him as motor while thin Narendra Dev was addressed as 'tamtam' which means, a horse cart. Narendra Dev immediately retorted. "Of what importance is a horse-cart before a motor and who asks about Mirza before Mister?"

Narendra Dev enjoyed a firm friendship with Gopinath. Though both were scholars in their own right yet instead of conflicts, there was mutual respect and attraction like the natural flow of a stream. It would be relevant to quote Gopinath on this friendship. As he wrote. "It is well-known that Narendra Dev was my classmate in M.A. at the Banaras Queen's College, in 1913. But there is more that I have to say. Actually, I first met Narendra Dev in March 1911. There is a brief history to this meeting. Having passed B.A. from Jaipur, Maharaja College of Rajasthan, in May 1910, I was admitted to the first year of M.A. at Banaras Queen's College. I was more interested in Philosophy, Sanskrit and Ancient History of India. Dr. Venice, a famous scholar was then the head of Queen's College. On his advice, I opted for 'D' group for the sixth year of the five-years category of Sanskrit M.A. In March 1911, I went to Allahabad for the exams of fifth year. This was around 22 March. There, I stayed at Biharilal's lodge and once the exams were over, began scouting around for good accomodation. At the time, an old friend, Gangaprasad Gupta was also staying at Allahabad. He belonged to Jaipur and we were old acquaintances. I sent a message to him and he arranged for my stay at his dear friend, Narendra Dev's place. Then, I went to meet Gangaprasad, who was staying at Law hostel and, onward to Narendra Dev's place. I received from him, genuine goodwill which lasted till death. Gangaprasad would visit occasionally to see if we were in need of anything. Narendra Dev was concerned for my welfare and would arrange whatever I needed. In those days, I suffered malaria attacks. When I suffered its attack at Allahabad, I came to know first-hand about the selflessness, affection, generosity and such other qualities of Narendra Dev. He only knew me through a friend yet he showered his affection on me. Both of us admired Indian culture and this link brought us closer in spirit, it evolved and found expression through the medium of literary

inclinations. After B.A. from Allahabad, Narendra Dev got admitted to fifth year of M.A. in Queen's College, Banaras. On 25 January, he came over to meet me. At the time, I lived at 53, Devnathpura, Bengali Tola, and Kashi. As Narendra Dev was able to read Bangla books and understand in-depth, the complex expressions as well, I gave him a book, '*Balmiki Jai*,' by Mahamahopadhyaya Harprasad Shastri. He knew of the book and meant to read it."

Pandit Gopinath has mentioned several other incidents of Narendra Dev's dedication to studies, his brilliance and serious thinking. Narendra Dev was also good friends with Shachindranath Sanyal and Hariram Divakar of Gwalior. Gopinath also mentions Narendra Dev's friendship with Janardhan Bhatt. Due to the focus on Acharya's political life, not much is known about his litterateur and other friends.

Janardana Bhatt was the son of Mahamahopadhyaya Pandit Ram Yadishwar Tarkaratna. Janardhana Bhatt is also mentioned among the friends and acquaintances of Shachindranath Sanyal, the prime accused in the 'Banaras conspiracy case.' In this context, it may be mentioned while studying at Allahabad, Acharya had also befriended another Janardana Bhatt, the son of famous Hindi writer, Pandit Balkrishna Bhatt. While conversing with Janardana Bhatt, it came to light that on Jawaharlal's request, Acharya had named his eldest grandson, Rajiv. Another friend of Acharya, Pandit Jagdhar Guleri was the younger brother of Pandit Chandradhar Sharma Guleri.

Acharya could never himself become an extremist since his thinking veered towards non-violence from the beginning, but he could not imagine attainment of independence, either by the legal constitutional means or through proposals and petitions. Extremist ways did attract him and since his student days, he was more drawn to the extremist politicians. Because of this and his internal unrest, though not involved in plots, he still helped those who were.

Since his student days Acharya had been close to Shachindrnath Sanyal, whose father, Harikeshav Sanyal was a famous teacher of Kashi and had taught the father of this author as well. Shachindranath Sanyal was implicated in the Banaras plot, along with Rasbihari Bose. After independence, he became an ascetic and wore only an upper garment and a loin cloth of white khadi. However, he always did carry a small revolver as a momento of his revolutionary activities.

Hariram Divakar studied Epigraphy and Paleography as well as a student of Dr. Venice too and mentions his first meeting with Narendra Dev thus: "It was the month of August the college was open. Early in the morning, I reached the principal's bungalow, to find him and two students, attempting to decipher a rock-edict. Of the two students, one was lean of frame, with wheatish complexion, wearing a dhoti, coat and cap. The other was in traditional Bengali attire. Wishing Mr. Venice a good morning, I reminded him of our correspondence. In a harsh tone, Mr. Venice loudly told me to come to the college office, in the afternoon. However, one of the two students gestured me to stay, perhaps the Principal had mentioned my letter and they were awaiting the third student. It was Narendra Dev of Faizabad who bade me stay. Then I told Mr. Venice humbly but firmly, "I have opted for and practiced this subject. I have also visited Kaalsi (the Ashoka rock-edict there was gaining recognition then). If you permit then I also may study this inscription." The teacher glanced at his students. The Bengali youth did not say anything but Narendra Dev spoke up, "No harm in letting him also see it." Drawing a chair across, I sat down to study the writing which ran thus: "XXX guptah prithvin Vijitya raja jayatya XXX ji meghah!" Of the almost invisible six letters, my Bengali friend had deciphered the first three as 'samundra.' Narendra Dev had quite intelligently deciphered the last two as 'te ve.' A discussion followed, about the prefix of 't' to it. All agreed that it could also be an 'h.' I had had some practice at the Ashoka age

script but almost none of the Gupta-age script. Still, having learnt Sanskrit, by the traditional method, I began pondering as to what root word could be suffixed there. Narendra Dev remarked, "tyahit vajimeghah." Mr. Venice noticed the 'h' yet could not make much out of it. When he glanced at me, I commented, 'aahit could be used in case of' fire but does not seem to go so well with 'meghah.' Fortunately the word 'aahrit' suggested itself to me and I spoke it out loud. All found it apt and Narendra Dev said, this seems like a verse – "*Samidroguptah Prithvi Vijitya, Raja jayatya ahrit vaji meghah.*" Narendra Dev had already read out the letters, I had only made a suggestion, which was generally accepted. The Bengali fellow did not say much but Narendra Dev felicitated my contribution. Our mutual admiration grew, as we became friends. Adroitly, Narendra Dev prised out, personal details about me, separation from the parents, 1909 Gwalior plot and subsequent two years rigorous imprisonment, my poverty yet the ambition for education. He was sympathetic and affectionately told me, "You need not worry about books, I have bought several and will buy more. We will both study from the same books." This reassured me. We studied jointly, in the morning, at Mr. Venice's bungalow and in the afternoon, at Narendra Dev's room. The exams arrived. The Bengali fellow passed in first division and Narendra Dev and me, in second. The credit for my having passed the exams, goes to him. His compassion made me respect him more."

Among Narendra Dev's non-political friends, Late Thakur Jaidev Singh was prominent and had the inclination for learning, in particular, the *Shaiva* philosophy and music. In 1928, he was appointed as a teacher at the Hindu High School in Faizabad. After completing L.L.B. Acharya Narendra Dev, as per his father's command, practiced Law at Faizabad from 1915. There began his lifelong friendship with Jaidev Singh. Both would go daily for the morning and evening walks and spend Sundays together. Like his father, Narendra Dev also understood the

importance of donation in life. He bought books and created a Library, to help the poor students study there.

Narendra Dev also provided free treatment to the poor particularly the children. He learnt biochemical treatments and would get medicines from Kakinada to distribute, free of cost, amongst the poor. Jaidev Singh joined him on Sundays, in the treatment of the poor.

One incident in particular brings out, the intimacy of Thakur's friendship with Narendra Dev. Once, Acharya was in dire financial straits and the only way out was to sell off a series of valuable paintings for this, Narendra Dev, sought the help of Jaidev Singh. Jaidev Singh was proud of his friendship with a great man such as Narendra Dev, a veritable mine of virtues and an extraordinary person whom only a few got to know, well enough.

Among the other close friends of Acharya was Sampoornanand. Both had mutual respect and affection for each other but the basis of their friendship was their principles. Sampoornanand had resigned his place at Bikaner to shift to Kashi. At Bikaner, he had written a book, "Samrat Ashok." The issue of its publication rose before the Gyanmandal Press whose founder was Babu Shivprasad Gupta. Due to his friendship with and confidence in Acharya's knowledge, Gyanmandal sought Acharya's opinion on the book. Acharya who was then at Kashi Vidyapeeth, found certain portions of the book controversial, particularly the authenticity of the one that dealt with contemporary art. Gyanmandal wanted to delete these portions before publishing the book but the author did not yield. Consequently the book could not be taken up. It was later published from Kanpur. This began their acquaintance but neither Acharya nor sampoornanand mentioned this incident ever, nor did it affect their mutual relations.

Narendra Dev and Sampoornanand were at Vidyapeeth together and even in politics, opportunities arose for working

together. As Sampoornanand himself wrote: "Often, Late Shivprasad Gupta, Acharya Shriprakash and I would all go together, to the sessions of the All India Congress Committee. We were quite young then. We listened intently but rarely imbibed any of it seriously, from Madhya Pradesh, Ravindra Rao, Mr. Bhargava, Seth Govind Das and Chedilal were there as well. Some observed that these were the two naughty-fours in the All India Congress Committee but sometimes, some good also came of our jest."

"At Gaya session of the Congress, the issue of debate was whether the Congress members should seek entry into councils or not. The debate dragged on. All arrangements of welcome committee fell through. Chairman Chitranjan Das would allow everyone to speak freely and the Maulanas flooded the scene. They were interested in the *Khilafat* movement and each would speak for two hours and a half at least. Each would quote extensively from the Koran and the Hadis, to prove that entry into the councils would be sinful and a direct path to hell. The audience were bored stiff, with no respite in sight. Finally, Kashis naughty-four in all seriousness proposed before Deshbandhu that the debate be postponed till the Hindu scholars could be summoned from Kashi, for the stand of Hindu scriptures, on the subject. Only after this should any opinion be formed and any decision taken on the topic. So far as I remember, Indradev Vachaspati supported us. Everyone understood that the proposal was full of mischief but it was approved, and the Maulanas too, yielded."

Among the four persons from Kashi, mentioned above, Shriprakash was one such friend of Acharya, who though of the same age, also bore the latter's guardianship. The two first met, in 1919 at Allahabad, in Pandit Madanmohan Malviya's house. Shriprakash had gone to Allahabad, to participate in the session of the All India Congress Committee. He stayed at Pandit Mádan Mohan Malviya's house, along with Shivprasad Gupta,

who was Narendra Dev's classmate. Narendra Dev came over to meet Shivprasad Gupta at Pandit Madanmohan Malviya's house and saw Shriprakash there. The two could become acquainted later only. Shriprakash noticed that Narendra Dev would smile mischievously often while reciting couplets of the famous contemporary Urdu poet, Akbar. At the session, both were elected as representatives for Amritsar Congress and became fast friends.

Shriprakash came to admire and respect Acharya so much that at the sacred-thread ceremony of his sons, he chose Acharya over the Brahmins, for the invocation of *gayatri mantra*. Shriprakash's palpable distress at having to watch Acharya work, even during illness, has been mentioned elsewhere to. Only a guardian could watch over his ward, the way Shriprakash did. Narendra Dev Acharya considered him, his patron. Shriprakash began affectionately addressing Narendra Dev as Acharya and the title became part of the latter's name. Shriprakash's guardianship is better understood from the words of Narendra Dev himself who wrote in his memoirs, "I have lived in his house, for months. He always looks after me, the way, a mother does, her child. He is of the opinion that I do not look after myself well and am very careless about my body."

Acharya Narendra Dev had several well-wishers but notable among those of national and international fame are Jawaharlal, Yusuf Meher Ali, Achyut Patvardhan, Babu Gangasharan, Prof. D.P. Mukherji, Dr. Ramdhar Mishra and Damodar Swarup Seth. Narendra Dev's intimacy and association with them requires more space than available here. They all wrote memoirs of their relations with Acharya, mentioning intimate incidents.

In a memoir, mentioning Jawaharlal, Narendra Dev writes, "He (Shriprakash) praised me to all and sundry. Though I came to know Jawaharlal during the 'Home-Rule movement' yet I came close to him and Ganeshji through Shriprakash only."

Acharya's respect and affection for Jawaharlal grew despite their ideological differences. The admiration prevailed even when Narendra Dev chose a path away from the Congress.

Narendra Dev's relations with Damodar Swarup Seth were more of a brother than a friend. They became acquainted when Narendra Dev was studying at the Myor Central College and Seth was a high-school student. They grew close when Damodar Swarup Seth also joined Kashi Vidyapeeth, as a teacher. The fact is that whoever came in Acharya's life, became his admirer.

Narendra Dev and Gandhiji

Till a century back, though enslaved, India in several aspects was self-reliant and composite. Though several young men and some young women as well, educated through English medium and trained in western ways, were blindly aping a foreign culture, a few of them were keen to also impart knowledge of Indian traditions, to their children. Narendra Dev's father was one such English educated man. Narendra Dev, at ten years of age, after his sacred thread ceremony, would in the evening with his father, perform the religious rituals and *gayatri* chant. Having learnt *Rudra* and *Geeta* by heart, since childhood, the daily rendition of '*Ramcharit Manas*' '*Mahabharat*', '*Laghu Sidhant Kaumudi*' and '*Amar Kosa*' made his Sanskrit base even stronger.

Swami Ramtirth often stayed at Narendra Dev's father's house and his influence made Narendra Dev too, see the path, traveling on which, makes men break free of worldly associations. Since childhood, Narendra Dev's spiritual inclinations and the academic excellence gained through the knowledge of Sanskrit, had been growing stronger. The spirituality of swami Ramtirth and Sri Aurobindo was clearly about freeing the country from British slavery and exhorted people to action.

On the political scene, Congress had already been established. The demand for independence was out in the open. At ten years of age, Narendra Dev, with his father, reached Lucknow for the Congress session and sat in the visitors gallery, sporting a representative badge. However, for his noisiness, he was ousted from there. Later when he was almost 15 years old he went to Banaras for the Congress session. Meanwhile, Bang-bhang had

made the youth restless. Anarchists and several older leaders also became involved. In congress there were those who wanted to revolt and others who were content with token opposition to the British rule. Narendra Dev was initially impressed more by Balgangadhar Tilak, Vipin Chandra Pal, Arvind Ghosh and Lala Lajpat Rai.

In 1906, upon his return from the Calcutta session of the Congress, the young Narendra Dev vowed to only use *Swadeshi* (indigenous articles). His thinking and lifestyle found a firm nationalistic footing. Narendra Dev made the decision to boycott foreign stuff not because he could not accept its foreign origin but only after reasoning and considering the consequences in-depth. He would not blindly ape anybody. This is why Acharya resigned from the regional Congress Committee when the condition of every member of the Regional Congress Committee having to weave and deposit two-thousand yard cotton, as the membership fee, was made compulsory. Acharya yet did not quit wearing khadi and rejoined as a member when the condition was no longer compulsory for membership.

Gandhiji had joined Indian politics. Impressed by Gokhle's dignity, selflessness and integrity, Gandhi came to regard him as his Guru. Later, with lessons from *Gita*, Gandhiji strengthened the selfless streak in his own nature. Assimilating dignity with determination, he displayed the strength of his own convictions and devotion to duty became an integral aspect of his life. This gave Gandhi's personality, a powerful dynamic force which overwhelmed Narendra Dev who himself strove for dignity, selflessness and integrity. The practical aspect of these virtues in Narendra Dev was Gandhi's contribution which marked the former's life forever.

Although Narendra Dev had been influenced by Gandhiji and his ideas. The two came in close contact when in 1929, Gandhi visited Kashi Vidyapeeth, for its convocation ceremony. Gandhi was so impressed with Narendra Dev's talent and

personality that he told Shriprakash, "Narendra Dev is a gem of a person whom I should have met much earlier." Here, it seems pertinent to mention that this first impression of Narendra Dev on Gandhiji remained so, till the last. Despite ideological differences, Gandhiji considered Narendra Dev, a capable and useful leader for the Congress.

Although Acharya Narendra Dev had became associated with the Congress and its ideology because of Tilak and Lala Hardayal, under the influence of Gandhiji, he was more active in Congress and headed the Uttar Pradesh Congress Committee in 1930. The Congress-Muslim League Agreement in 1916 provided cause for worry, to the British government. Tilak had re-entered Congress and the so-called extremist forces were growing powerful in Congress. The demands for autonomy, appointment of Indians as officers in the Indian army etc., were gaining credence.

Gandhi's leadership had been accepted in general and despite their differences, an agreement took place between the groups of Liberals and the extreme-nationalists. Both sides were divided over the issue of participation in the 1920 elections to the Legislative assembly. Unlike Tilak, Gandhiji favoured boycotting the elections. Though Narendra Dev did not agree with the idea of boycott yet he did not oppose Gandhiji. Being a man of discipline, Narendra Dev considered it inappropriate to not obey the decisions of his party. In 1926, when the Congress accepted council-programme, then too Narendra Dev agreed to it.

Free-thinking was strong in Narendra Dev and his introspection reinforced it. Whenever a program or idea of establishing economic harmony was mooted in Congress, Narendra Dev support it. He considered the regeneration of Indian society essential for a free India. This was why when the Independence of India League was established by the efforts of Subhas Chandra Bose and Jawaharlal, Narendra Dev became its member and also a minister in its organization in U.P. However,

when Congress declared complete autonomy as its objective in 1930, the independent authority of this institution became invalid.

Under Gandhi's leadership, when 26 January, 1930 was celebrated nationwide as the Complete Autonomy Day and Gandhiji violated the salt-law, by the Dandi march, Narendra Dev also participated in it, along with his students and fellow teachers. This civil-disobedience movement later became more well-known as the salt-satyagraha. Narendra Dev contributed actively in promoting this movement in the United Provinces (now Uttar Pradesh) and he was also the officiating prime-minister of the regional Congress Committee. While conducting the programme for this movement, he was arrested from Basti and imprisoned for three months.

Narendra Dev actively supported Gandhiji in politics as they shared similar ideas. Despite their differences on socialism, Narendra Dev never let it appear as if he did not, consider Gandhiji his or the nation's supreme leader or want to work under Gandhi's leadership. Gandhiji and Narendra Dev also shared a similar approach to the Hindu-Muslim problem. Like Gandhiji, Narendra Dev also believed that so long as the Hindu-Muslim differences plagued the nation, political freedom would remain a distant and meaningless dream.

Narendra Dev also agreed with Gandhi's ideas about the harijans, believing them to be an integral part of the Indian society, in particular, of its Hindu majority and, that they could not be kept out of the mainstream. Narendra Dev always opposed the British diplomacy to segregate harijans from the main Hindu society. He recognised well, the futuristic import of Gandhi's program and always actively cooperated with him.

Even after the establishment of the Congress Socialist Party, Narendra Dev followed Gandhiji as his leader and worked for India's freedom. The failure of the civil disobedience movement in 1932-33 dismayed many young congressmen. It would not be

relevant here, to go and explore the causes for that failure but the way in which Gandhiji ordered its suspension, is a pertinent issue. Calling off this movement paved the way for the establishment of the Congress Socialist Party. Party-workers like Rafi Ahmad Kidwai, Narendra Dev, Sampoornanand felt the need to consider anew, the entire issue.

Gandhiji was particularly attentive to the harijans and even undertook a fast-unto death, on the issue of integrating them with the mainstream Hindu society. For the harijans, Gandhiji undertook several fasts and the later part of his life was devoted primarily to serving them. However, leaders like Narendra Dev and Sampoornanand felt the need for a specific focus on labourers and farmers in the ideology and programme of Congress. Gandhiji was aware of this but felt that to maintain the composite nature and the unity of the Indian society, and for it, to advance on the path of progress, it was essential that he emphasis more, the spiritual aspects.

Gandhi's spiritual thinking was devoid of religious fanaticism or conservatism. He wanted the historical stream of the cultural progress of India, to flow again so that its integrity could be sustained. Narendra Dev agreed with Gandhi's ideas but the young leaders were pained by the economic distress of the Indian labourers and farmers. They could not ignore it and worried about it. In their view, the tenets of socialism appeared to be an attractive solution to this problem. Gandhiji saw or wanted to see, complete autonomy, the sole objective of Congress, as the solution to all problems. Perhaps he did not consider it feasible then to analyse the economic relations, in the Indian society or between its different classes. He was apprehensive that this might trigger class-conflicts which may obscure the objective of complete autonomy.

When and how, the socialistic ideologies made their way into India, is in itself, an independent and interesting issue. To believe or view it as being associated with some other subject would be

doing it, an injustice. However, it is essential to point out that the ideology of scientific socialism came from the west, from several directions, in fragments and appeared to be the need of the hour. Some favoured accepting it in its basic imported form, some, its refined form while others wanted to test it on the touchstone of Indian wisdom and mould it into an independent, Indian shape.

In Gandhi's spiritualism, the human compassion that had assumed the proportions of universal compassion according to Buddhist definition, could not progress, without the foundation of fraternity and equanimity. Although Gandhiji did not have the time to define such an ideology and philosophy, yet he could see it quite clearly. This is why, when Sampoornanand wrote his book, 'Socialism' and sent it to Gandhiji for comments, praising it, Gandhiji requested him to write an independent book on philosophy. Consequently, Sampoornanand's book on philosophy was published by the title '*Yidvilaas*'. Narendra Dev also never got the opportunity to give a detailed concrete form to the philosophical aspect of his thinking. This would be seen as a loss in the intellectual development of India. If he had spared time, truth is, if he had been allowed the time to do so, then the import of such a book written by him, would have far exceeded thousands of speeches and movements. For the lack of it, each individual has been free to elaborate on his interpretation of Narendra Dev's socialism.

There was sufficient ideological harmony between Gandhiji and Narendra Dev to rise above the base of programmes and from the spiritual point of view, both were at the same wavelength. To clarify this, it seems essential to illustrate, from Narendra Dev's own ideas. Analysing the cultural aspect of socialism, Narendra Dev observes, "the situation is such that socialism means not just the socialization of the means of production but also the socialization of one's life. A socialist does not live only for himself and his family but the entire society. He is liberal and generous and keeps an account of human distress

in the same way as a seismograph functions, to record the slightest tremor."

The feeling of sacrificing one's life for the society is the very feeling of *vaishnav* compassion that Gandhiji advocated. One should be sensitive to other's sufferings. Narendra Dev believed Gandhiji to be the first person to really understand the significant role of people in any national movement. Before Gandhiji the educated class in India believed either in constitutional or conspiratorial means. Gandhiji identified with masses and when India became independent, he set the goal of a class-less and caste-less society which would be free of exploitation, with the people as sovereign.

Suffice it to say that when Tilak was no more, Narendra Dev believed in Gandhiji as his own and the nation's leader. While in Congress, Narendra Dev worked under Gandhi's leadership. Even when Narendra Dev quit Congress, Gandhiji remained his ideal for his civilised conduct and the prestige of the individual in the society. Despite certain ideological differences, Gandhiji remained Narendra Dev's torch-bearer in politics. Narendra Dev did not give up the Gandhi cap for the red cap of his party.

Patron of Socialism

While still a student, Narendra Dev was greatly influenced by politics and religion. When he was ten years old, he went with his father, to the Lucknow session of Congress where he saw Lokmanya Tilak, Rameshchandra Dutt and Mahadev Govind Ranade, Narendra Dev was much impressed by their personalities. In those days, he was also influenced by Mahamana Malviya and Swami Ramtirth. Narendra Dev's father was under Congress influence. Consequently, Congress and *sanatana* values found roots in Narendra Dev's personality. Those were the days of *Swadeshi* movement and India was undergoing political turmoil.

Pandit Madhav Prasad Mishra often stayed at the house of Narendra Dev's father and 'Desherkatha', a Bengali book that he translated into Hindi was confiscated. This also aroused nationalistic feelings in Narendra Dev. By 1905-06, he had already joined the extreme nationalist group in Congress. Being a regular reader of Calcutta's daily, 'Vande Matram', he was much influenced by the ideas of Sri Aurobindo.

Soon, Acharya came into contact with some revolutionaries. Also, his friends studying abroad, regularly sent him the revolutionary literature from London, Paris, Geneva, Berlin etc. places. Despite governmental restrictions, Narendra Dev regularly got to read Lala Hardayal's 'Vande Matram', 'Lalkar' published from Germany and 'Indian Sociologist from Paris.

The success of the Russian revolution attracted the attention of the youth, the world over. The educated, intellectual young people of India could not be an exception to this. They studied in-depth, the Russian propagandist literature smuggled into India. It

moulded their thinking. Among such intellectual Indians were those who, while studying the ideas of these philosophers were defining it anew, on the basis of their capacity for independent analysis. Narendra Dev was also such an intellectual person who while fighting for freedom had still not forgotten the ancient history of India.

Believing the exchange of ideas essential for intellectual development, Narendra Dev yet could not support imported ideas blindly. Indian nationalism and its identity were his prime concern. Narendra Dev's tenure at the Kashi Vidyapeeth proved very beneficial for serious study and free-thinking. While there, he tested his ideas against the calibre of his meritorious students, also extending thus, the field of influence, of his ideas.

Meanwhile, a strange situation arose with the suspension and apparent failure of the civil disobedience movement in 1930-32. When Gandhi called off the movement, suddenly, without a proper reason for the same, it spread discontent among young congressmen. They began to believe that complete autonomy could not be achieved by non-violent Satyagraha. They were also dismayed that those from middle-class were gaining majesty in Congress. The extreme nationalist intellectuals in Congress like Narendra Dev came to believe firmly that Congress was becoming a totally middle class national organization. Narendra Dev was of the view that the struggle for freedom would not be people-based or have the spark to burn away poverty after attainment of independence unless and until cooperation is sought from Indian farmers, labourers and those lakhs of people who are suffering under foreign rule. They have no idea about even the concept of freedom and are fatalists, uncaring of whether the rulers are Indians or foreigners.

Narendra Dev was of the opinion that the middle-class people cannot be revolutionaries. There were others in Congress too, who believed that the struggle for freedom will not be successful until the common man, illiterate and poor, and most of

such people were farmers and labourers, came to be educated and could rise in society and share in the political management of the country.

Congressmen, with socialist bent-of-mind wanted to remain in Congress but prepare a programme for struggle, on the basis of socialist ideas. Such people had formed groups, believing firmly that formulating programmes on the basis of Socialist ideals, would bring into the Congress, the lower middle-class people, landless farmers, small farmers, labourers and other backward classes, who would fight the final battle of Congress. Those working on this idea were making their own programme unaware that elsewhere also, work was being accomplished on the same ideology. Soon, however, four such places were identified as Bombay, Patna, Banaras and Kerala.

Yusuf Meher Ali, M.R. Masani and Achyut Patwardhan were providing direction and guidance in Bombay. Jaiprakash was providing leadership at Patna. Namboodiripad's role was significant on the Kerala front. In Banaras, though the reins were not in any particular hand yet the contribution of Sampoornanand was quite visible.

In 1930, Sampoornanand had prepared an outline of a socialist program that attempted to explain what the Congress would have to do, once the British were ousted from India. This booklet was titled 'when we are in power.' It was distributed on a large-scale but except for the British administrators in India, none paid much attention to it. In the booklet were mentioned nine specific chapters. Their reference would not be appropriate here, since later on, with some changes, they found their place in the programme of the Congress Socialist Party and the Praja Socialist Party. They were:

1. Abolition of Zamindari system, with compensation for the same.
2. Nationalisation of main traffic and industries.

3. Chakbandi of Farm-land (ceiling)
4. To fix the minimum wages and work hours.
5. Work to all and provision of pension for the aged.
6. Paid leave to all women, one-month before and after delivery.
7. Arrangement of free food and education for all those children who are orphans or their parents are economically ill-equipped to take up responsibility.
8. Total ban on liquor.
9. Tax-free salt.

As mentioned before, the wave of socialism was sweeping all over and the intellectuals felt that it was the only way to get rid of the blocks before Congress. Talks were everywhere, of working on the socialist structure, in an organized manner. Under these circumstances, people holding such a view, met in the summer of 1934, at the residence of Sampoornanand, to decide that a socialist party should be organised. Then, people with socialist leanings were informally contacted at other centers in India. Finally, a meeting was held at Patna under the chairmanship of Acharya Narendra Dev, to provide it an all-India dimension. At this meeting, it was decided that on the occasion of the coming session of congress at Bombay, a socialist party should be organised within Congress. It was also decided that before this, in all provinces (in those days, regions were called provinces), the provincial Socialist Parties should be established which would take an all-India form, at the Bombay session of Congress.

The Congress session took place at Bombay in October 1934. On 21-22 October, the session of the socialist party was held at Readhemoney Hall. It was chaired by Sampoornanand. At this session the constitution of Congress Socialist Party was adopted. An executive was also formed with Jaiprakash as General Secretary and Sampoornanand as a member along with

others. Acharya was the chairman of this executive committee. Thus, Acharya's line with the Socialist Party, from its birth, made him, a patron of socialism, its advocate and its expert with an Indian view, till his last breath.

Narendra Dev's nationalism and the deterioration of economic and religious values in the Indian society paved the way for the origin and development of his socialist thinking. Before him was the curse of foreign rule without freedom from which, the upliftment of India and its society was not possible. However, whereas, for scholars, freedom meant getting rid of British rule, Narendra Dev wanted to see the Indian society freed of all tyranny and exploitation, in an independent India. Due to an in depth study of Indian history and religion, while observing the weakness and reasons for defeatism of the Indian society from a social point of view, the upliftment of the Indians appeared essential to Narendra Dev.

Like his contemporary and predecessor, other great men, Narendra Dev's relations with his countrymen could have been just that of a social reformer. He could also have just remained a soldier or leader of the national level freedom struggle, since several such great men found hope for the immediate success of their objective. They felt that when universal cooperation is needed to throw off the foreign yoke, then it is not necessary that the Indian administration and its economic base be analysed, even before getting independence. They believed that doing so would bring vested interests out in the open and people would seek to protect their own selfish interests, instead of fighting for the independence of the country. A class-struggle would begin that would weaken the fight for freedom and the British rulers would benefit by this.

This had already happened though on a small scale. Taking advantage of the outline of the socialist programme in Sampoornanand's booklet, presented by him before Congress, in 1930, the Britishers garnered the support of the native zamindars,

against the Congress. Not all zamindars in India enjoyed a prestigious social status. Despite the title of a zamindar, most of them were worse-off than the big farmers even. Their contribution to the struggle for independence could not be ignored.

The creative inactivity brought about, by the suspension of the civil disobedience movement in 1933-34, pushed several leaders to new activities. In Uttar Pradesh, Rafi Ahmad Kidwai, Acharya Kriplani, Acharya Narendra Dev, Sampoornanand and some others decided to begin two special programmes at the time. One was the investigation of complaints and the exploitation of the sugarcane growing farmers in Uttar Pradesh. This was connected to sugarcane-mill-owners and the sugarcane-producers. The latter included small zamindars as well.

The other program was to investigate the 1930-32 excesses by the zamindars, on the farmers, for their active cooperation to Congress and the freedom struggle. Acharya Narendra Dev and Sampoornanand were assigned Deoria and Gorakhpur as areas of operation. When their report was published, many could not believe that the zamindars had harassed the farmers in such ways. The reports prepared by others about the excesses perpetrated in other regions, were similar. In this regard, Mahatma had corresponded with the then Viceroy along with a charge-sheet of the details particularly of Siswan bazaar.

Witnessing such exploitation, atrocities and poverty as well as his personal inclinations not only strengthened Narendra Dev's socialist leaning but also provided him, the vision to implement it, in the Indian environment. Narendra Dev had expressed his views on socialism, communism (also called collectivism in other words), democracy etc., communities, principles and ideologies. However, before presenting Narendra Dev's opinions, it appears feasible to also mention the views of his associates, friends and researchers. 'Sangharsh' the magazine started by Narendra Dev dedicated a special edition, on his

death. The National Book Trust brought out a souvenir edited by Dr. Kasekar and B.K.N. Menon.

Among Narendra Dev's friends, those, whose views are considered worth a mention are Hiralal Khanna, Dr. Kasekar, Surendranath Dwivedi, Ashok Mehta, N.G. Gore, Yusuf Meher Ali, Shriprakash, Achyut Patwardhan, Gangasharan Singh, Sampoornanand, D.P. Mukherjee, Damodar Swarup Seth, Ajai Ghosh and Shakuntala Srivastava. Prof. Mukutbihari Lal has devoted an entire book to the personality and leadership skills of Acharya, therefore his ideas would have to be mentioned separately.

Hiralal was among the childhood friends of Narendra Dev. They knew each other from six-seven years of age and gradually their friendship strengthened enough to last a lifetime. Hiralal observed about Narendra Dev that at Bangkok where he had gone as a representative of the Socialist Party, declaring his firm belief in socialism, Narendra Dev had announced that for attaining the socialist objectives, all socialists of the world should form an international forum that excludes America and Russia. It is memorable that socialism was discussed, without any regard for America and Russia.

Dr. Kasekar remembers that when Gandhiji came to Kashi, in 1928-29, for propagating khadi, he was much impressed by Narendra Dev who was then at the Kashi Vidyapeeth. Later, he invited Narendra Dev for a lecture at the convocation ceremony at Gujarat Vidyapeeth. Gandhiji wanted Narendra Dev to become Congress President. If those opposing socialism had not been in majority in Congress, Narendra Dev would have chaired it twice. Gandhiji thought highly of Narendra Dev and Narendra Dev also admired Gandhiji. In Surendranath Dwivedi's opinion, Narendra Dev was a visionary having studied the development of human society in-depth, Narendra Dev believed in Marxism while socialism, to him was not just a matter of belief but a way of life. It was a practical way to a public revolution. In those

days, when few understood the elementary distinction between communism and socialism and comprehend that class conflict could be devoid of violence and that there is no need for tyranny to establish socialism, Narendra Dev comprehended all these factors.

Narendra Dev understood the basic differences between communism and socialism, believing that violence as a method is not essential for class-conflicts and he totally opposed tyranny. Acharya explained the Marxian principles anew and defined Marxism and Socialism in Indian context. Dwivedi further observes that in his book, Acharya also made clear, the role of India, in democratic socialism.

Ashok Mehta was one of Narendra Dev's close socialist associates. In his tribute to Acharya Narendra Dev, Mehta directs attention to his personality-traits, something that helps form an independent opinion about his life-character, beliefs and leanings. Mehta observes that according to Prof. Reisman, individuals lead a double-standard life but where these two are integrated, ideal life begins. As Mehta remarks, Narendra Dev had attained this state of being. He would never compromise on moral principles. He never stooped to the standard of public politics but constantly tried to make people understand the ideals of life, broaden their intellectual horizons and uplift them. He always fought for freedom, unity and fraternity. He believed that man was the basic centre of life and this is why the socialism that he propounded, was democratic and humanitarian.

The views of Narendra Dev's admirer and intellectual friend, Prof. D.P. Mukherjee are worth mentioning here. Prof. Mukherjee observes that Narendra Dev did not let go of the Gandhi cap for the red cap of his party, not even at the time when he was leading the farmers march. He could not break with tradition here. Gandhiji had moulded himself in Narendra Dev's frame and had influenced his thought-process. Prof. Mukherjee adds that Narendra Dev did not hanker after Marxism as he found it to be a bit too much. According to Prof.

Mukherjee, Narendra Dev was a mere Leninist than a Marxist but still not a Stalinist. Different from communist, he could quote Marx, Engles and Lenin, in appropriate historical context. Seemingly familiar with Narendra Dev's humantarism. Prof. Mukherjee remarks, about him, "He was humane. Possibly, totally humane. Was it being human that saved him from becoming superhuman, an inflexible God? But then, how did he justify his faith in class conflict or is there no inherent contradiction between these two, that is my question".

Now, we may view in detail Prof. Mukutbihari Lal's opinion of Acharya Narendra Dev, since being close to him he had observed and tested his views. Prof. Mukutbihari Lal was himself a Marxist and a lecturer. It can then be expected of him that he would have explained objectively Acharya's beliefs and ideas. If not, it would be the reader's discretion. According to him, Acharya basically accepted Marx and Engel's social analysis, and the process of social development but along with the physical elements of Marxism, he also emphasized the humane aspects. He accepted the Marxian principle that relations are established according to the development of productive forces, the economic structure of society follows by linking productive relations and the political and cultural wall has economic foundation as its base.

Narendra Dev also accepted the Marxian principle that the great men propounding certain principles under certain conditions are themselves the result of change in circumstances. Also, these principles are accepted in society as they conform to the changed new conditions. Acharya also accepted that philosophy, religion, politics etc., thinking processes of the society undergo fundamental changes at the time when there is structural change in the composition of society. Narendra Dev also asserted that human beings and situations, both are changeable and unstable and just as humans create situations so also circumstances make a man. The legal and political institutions, though a result of the

economic structure, become independent forces and affect historical activities.

According to Mukutbihari, in the opinion of Acharya, several factors contribute to historical developments. As Prof. Lal comments, Acharya believed that, to establish a new social order, besides a favourable social situation and progress, conscious efforts by human beings is also essential. He agreed with Lenin's view that both, revolutionary conditions and revolutionary efforts, are necessary for revolution. He also felt that a revolution is not successful by itself but is so, only when it is organised well and the leaders of the revolution have a clear and constructive vision.

Acharya basically accepted the class analysis of Marx and considered class-conflict essential for a classless society. He also accepted the existence of class-cooperation and believed that despite the conflicts between the interests of various classes, for the existence of society, class cooperation is necessary to some extent, without it, society would disintegrate yet he believed class-conflict, to be an essential fall-out of class-society. In this way, the class-conflict of the oppressed is the main instrument of social revolution and an essential means of establishing a socialist class-less society.

As Prof. Lal puts it, "supporting the class-conflict of the oppressed, Narendra Dev would say that class conflict has been the basis of social revolution. The socialists neither create nor like class-conflicts. Their purpose is to organise the society in such a way what mutually opposing classes and their ongoing conflicts end." What Prof. Lal wants to is that despite accepting that class conflicts has been the basis of social revolution, Acharya basically believed that the socialist people do not create class-conflicts, they do not even like it. Their objective is to organise society thus as to end the conflicts between the mutually opposing classes.

Prof. Lal, considering Narendra Dev, a supporter of certain Leninist beliefs, observes that like Lenin, Acharya also emphasised that socialist revolution is not possible on the basis of the labour class only, revolutionary socialist leadership of the middle-class, literate, people is also essential. Narendra Dev observed that according to the Marxists, a revolutionary movement cannot take place without revolutionary principles. The philosophy of socialism is created and developed by scholars and thinkers who predict the upcoming society. Thus, lower middle-class revolutionary thinkers are the spiritual medium of a socialist revolution. Further exploring the closeness of Narendra Dev's beliefs and Lenin's ideas, Prof. Lal holds that in Acharya's opinion, while the fundamental changes in society and transference of state-power, from one class to another, is a revolution, there, the aim of a social revolution is to create a 'classless society' that has neither a ruler nor the ruled. "Like Lenin, Acharya Narendra Dev also did not consider terrorism and plots, a part of revolution. For the lack of democratic strategies, he supported organised armed conflict, for revolution but did not consider armed revolution, either necessary or beneficial under all circumstances. Acharya believed that in this country, the duty of the socialists is to protect democracy from the anti-democratic sentiments and forces, strengthen people's faith in the democratic principles, make political democracy powerful, socialist revolution successful, by democratic means and establish a socialist society."

Acharya's views were similar to Marxism and yet different. As Prof. Lal explains, "It was Acharya's view that under Stalinist dictatorship, both Soviet and international communism have strayed. Narendra Dev was totally against the dictatorship and totalitarianism prevalent in Russia. It was his belief that totalitarianism gives rise to terror and makes a man, a mere cog in the state machinery. It destroys human dignity and does not provide opportunities for a man to develop his personality. Narendra Dev was not ready to accept the Stalinist autocracy,

dictatorship of labour, as propounded by Marx. In Acharya' view Marx had visualised the despotism of bourgeoisie for those countries where the capitalist class was capable of marshalling immediately, all military power of state, against its opposing forces."

Narendra Dev was ready to support international cooperation against socialism and communist forces but he considered it wrong to dream, in the name of international communism, Soviet Russia as the father of Indian labour and thrust the leadership of communist Party of Soviet Russia over the communist parties, the world over.

Prof. Lal concludes, "It is clear from this that though Acharya was a Marxian yet his Marxism was not an off-shoot of Russian communism and fanaticism. He considered Marxian philosophy, a developing one, like all philosophy and had himself contributed to its development. On one hand, by laying emphasis on the coordination of nationalism and socialism and making liberal nationalism, a part of comprehensive socialism, he solved a major problem of Marxism. On the other hand, by emphasising the combination of agricultural revolution and the socialist revolution and deeming a combined front of labour and farmers, essential for socialist revolution and teaching the lessons of mutual relations between the farmers and the labourers on the basis of equality, Narendra Dev solved another big problem of Marxism. Thirdly, distinguishing between a cooperative and collectivisation and labeling cooperatives as a part of the socialist order, Acharya emphasized building a rural economic order on its basis and thus paved the way for pacifying the conflict of farmers against socialism due to collectivisation. Fourthly, by integrating the principles of order in socialised industries under Marxism, through democratic decentralisation, industrial democracy and autonomous corporations, he gave it a comprehensive and democratic form and shielded it from

the totalitarianism and centralised bureaucracy of democratic centralisation. In the fifth place, by opposing the concept of dichotomous socialism and democracy and branding the inspiration of democracy a part of human nature. Narendra Dev accepted the privacy of individual's freedom and human rights, by establishing a relationship between economic democracy and the political one, accepting the importance of opposition groups in a democracy, labeling democratic opinions in a democratic state as aware, strong and comprehensive, by emphasising the creation of a socialist society through democratic means including Satyagraha and strike, Acharya refined and strengthened the democratic nature of Marxism and saved it from being perverted by individual worship and party dictatorship. Sixthly, by emphasising the creative power of the individual and narrating as to how an individual actively reacts to nature, changes conditions by their possibilities, changes environment, changes own nature and develops his power, Narendra Dev strengthened the non-fatalist elements of Marxism and took a step towards filling up the vacuum of its sadly lacking psychological dimension. Seventhly, by branding as compulsory, even for the Marxist, obedience to sustainable moral values and good conduct, accepting humanity as the basis of Marxism and analyzing the ethics of a Marxist society, he fostered the moral form of Marxism and supplemented its ethical views. In the eighth place, by describing certain basic elements of the socialist culture and making it a significant part of building up a socialist society, Acharya promoted the cultural objective of Marxism."

After discussing these eight points of contribution, Prof. Lal writers that Acharya observed, "Marxism is not an eternal principle. It also changes along with the pace of life. Its characteristic lies in its being revolutionary. To tamper with Marxist teachings is not inappropriate so long as, by such changes, you can still keep its revolutionary element intact. To consider Marxism as a live scripture is its glory."

Prof. Lal concludes: "Actually, this contribution of Narendra Dev promotes humanist and democratic elements of Marxism and are in accordance with its spirit which is inherent in Marxian thinking."

Before more is written on the topic of Narendra Dev's socialism, suffice it to say that while believing in and respecting the conclusions and opinions of Prof. Mukutbihari Lal, certain doubts do linger on, which also occurred to Prof. D.P. Mukherjee, himself a socialist, about Acharya's humanitarianism and class-conflict. Several questions do arise that demand a better explanation. It would be an insult, to think that Acharya worked to show-off or acted out of the fear of a conservative society.

In Acharya's life, there were several incidents of his remaining steadfast on logical principles. In the preceding chapter, his persona has been studied well. Therefore, it would be appropriate to assume that Acharya's own beliefs and integrity were behind the actions and he considered these, the ideals not only of his own life but of the society as well.

If Acharya had not been an independent philosopher, not a well-read free-thinking intellectual, if he had not found true, the streams of Indian culture and civilization, on the touchstone of his own thinking and logic. If he had only been a true Marxian then he should not have had Shriprakash initiate his son into chanting after a methodical sacred-thread ceremony. He would also not have participated in the '*upanayana* ceremony' of Shriprakash's son or imparted *gayatri* chant to him. It cannot be assumed that since he had initiated the son of Shriprakash, his own son's sacred-thread ceremony was a reciprocal gesture. Neither can it be said that he was not a staunch Marxist at the time. Although not a fact yet even if this be assumed then too, Acharya had already studied Buddhist philosophy in-depth by then and respected as well as accepted *shraman* culture, with all his heart. Therefore, this would have shaken his faith, if not in the

ceremony itself then its rituals. Beside, his revolt against the class-ridden society and its conservatism had been apparent for long. The history and philosophy of India and the ideas of *Arya Samaj* and Gandhiji clearly influenced him in this.

There is no place in Marxism for belief in the *varna*-ashram though it be re-packaged, with suitable reforms. A true Marxian, who is stabilising his philosophy on the basis of only imported ideas, would never indulge in such conduct. Then, did Acharya really believe in the *varna*-system? The answer lies with the man himself.

Narendra Dev did not consider the class-system as anything more than a historical sequence of events. During his intensive study of the Indian history and culture of a certain time-period, he had been impressed for a while until the realisation that the system had, by his time, turned irrelevant and was blocking social progress. Acharya observed, "Class system prevailed in ancient India. To protect it was state's duty. The state did not interfere in the functioning of social organisations. The Society was divided into classes. Each class had fixed means of livelihood. Social control was rigid in certain areas. There were conservative restrictions in the area of social relationship, marriage and livelihood but there was freedom of expression. One could not be boycotted from the society for believing or not, in God, whether one's religion was in accordance with the *Vedas* or not. However, one could be ex-communicated from the society for marrying during the period when the '*pratiloma*' marriage was prohibited and a low-caste (a *savarna*) marriage during the time period set for the high-caste (*savarna*) one. Thus also were the outcastes bound by their caste restrictions. The privileges bestowed upon the Brahmins were not available to scheduled castes and others."

After clarifying the historical facts, Narendra Dev explains his views, observing, that natural development is restricted by the livelihood being creed-based and each class having fixed means

of livelihood. However, the social rules were not for those who had renounced a householder's life for spiritual pursuits. Anyone could become a *shraman* and all could strive for gaining *nihshreyas*. Salvation is the true goal. Acharya believed in the saying from the Upanishad, "There is no being superior to a human being." However, Narendra Dev did not want to shake the Indian framework of religious conduct; in the individual development of human beings. Acharya believed in it.

Acharya observed the role of righteous religious conduct in the rise and development of four-ashrams. He understood the importance of '*upanayana*' ceremony, in the first phase under the ashram system. Man's entire life was constantly progressing in the multi-faceted development of the Indian schools of thought. In the process, man assumed one role after another. The ceremony inculcated the values in him that gave him the power, to set order in the society and be religious. The establishment of a moral order was a major distinction of the Indian culture. Expressing his firm belief in it, Narendra Dev states, "for the successful control over life and a healthy development, a moral order is essential. By expressing belief in the fruits of action with the aim to easily motivate human action towards great goals, the four objectives of religion, economy, sex and salvation, have been established in the Indian culture. Salvation is considered the supreme objective. It means the spiritual and intellectual emancipation of human beings. None may attain salvation without *yoga*. *Yoga* means control over the instincts. All Indian sects, whether individual based or not, are unanimous on this, with the same objective, emancipation of human being. Not harbouring the desire for the fruits of one's labour and by good actions, advancing continuously on the path to salvation is the basic premise of Indian culture." This is also the reason why Narendra Dev was often found discussing Marxian views which he considered the essential part of socialism.

Acharya emphasised upon the moral and cultural elements of Marxism and often quoted Marx's observation that the bourgeoisie needs confidence, dignity and freedom much more than the daily bread. The 'socialism of Acharya' was one big moral and cultural revolution placing greater value upon these elements of Marxism, Narendra Dev considered Marx to be 'a great humanist of his era.' In his view, any principle, 'ism' or idea, whether, a religion, philosophy or economics that undervalues the human evolution is not acceptable to Marx. Demeaning the dignity of a person was also unacceptable to Narendra Dev. He saw in human evolution, the evolution of the society. To him, the four-ashrams were the four-storeyed building of human evolution. Clarifying his life philosophy, Narendra Dev comments that each person is a goal in himself and must search for the path acceptable to and complete for him.

Such deliberations should make it clear that Narendra Dev was basically, a free-thinking intellectual. He studied extensively the eminent as well as the modern ideologies of East and West and all major philosophies propounded of his era. There was no intellectual inhibition or prejudice in him. Acharya was an intellectual with independent ideas on the basis of his deliberations. It is unfortunate that he did not write an independent book on socialism, that democratic socialism which he propounded but could not put down in writing. No time was available to him, to write. If he had been able to do that, then he would have left behind, an invaluable legacy which would have shown a well-planned way for the welfare of humanity, because Acharya was a revolutionary seeker intellectual.

Narendra Dev's friend and associate Sampoornanand, a like minded person on a same wavelength, expressed his ideas on the duties of the Indian intellectuals, in few sentences, put together, they became a true definition of intellectualism. The summation of his statements would be thus: "the best quality of an intellectual is that he is a revolutionary who does not bow

before authority. A true intellectual cannot have a blind or lopsided approach. He is not a follower of traditional morality. His compassion is comprehensive." On this touchstone, Narendra Dev truly shines from all aspects, he was a true intellectual. He accepted a view only when it proved true on the touchstone of logic, not as a pension. His prime concern was the welfare of his country and the identity of its spirit. Actually, he did not follow anybody. He was just being himself, Narendra Dev and that was his identity.

Efforts for a classless Society

In 1917, Mahamana Madan Mohan Malviya established in Uttar Pradesh (then, the United Provinces), a *Kisan Sabha*. He was also its Regional Head. Home-Rule League had been established by then and Narendra Dev was the founder and secretary of its Faizabad branch. Uttar Pradesh was a backward province, so far as industries were concerned. Beside some mills at Kanpur and a few sugar factories at Gorakhpur, there was little else in Uttar Pradesh, to highlight the problems of the labourers. Not only the farmers but the zamindars (landlords) and taluqdars were also more in number here as compared to other provinces. Of these, most zamindars or taluqdars, for their own luxury and comforts, preferred living in the cities then their own estates or fiefdoms.

The total burden of care and management of the zaminder's estates fell on their staff which could behave as it pleased. The absence of their bosses and the constant demands for money, however, gave them occasion for inhuman excesses. This management was, to a major extent, in the interests of the owners, therefore gradually excesses became commonplace, even becoming customary, at some places. Some of these assumed universal dimensions. *Begaar* or forced labour is one example.

The Congress Committee of the then United Provinces, decided to study the lot of farmers and this task was entrusted to Sampoornanand and Narendra Dev. Working among the farmers of Faizabad district had given them good experience. As members of the committee organised by the provincial Congress wing, they toured the entire province before presenting their

report. After this study and his experiences, Narendra Dev became sure that periodical reforms cannot solve the problems of the farmers.

Narendra Dev's family had estates which his elder brothers, Mahendradev, managed. However, in Acharya's opinion, this institution had lost its usefulness and relevance and in its abolition lay the interests of farmers. This was the basic and only solution, for the economic development of the farmers and the release of zamindars from the conservatism and degradation plaguing their clan. Therefore, Narendra Dev advocated the idea of organizing the farmers for their political and economic freedom.

Without Liberation of farmers, any step taken for the establishment of socialism would prove fruitless. Narendra Dev considered their active cooperation necessary, in the fight for freedom and an essential element in the establishment of a socialist set-up. He was hopeful for their strategic advantage in the struggle for independence of India. British administration would find it difficult to reach each village and each home in a village, but if political consciousness and socialist ideas about the economic structure of society could spread successfully among the farmers, then this large community could fight the demon of imperialism successfully, on its own. For this, Narendra Dev wanted to use the medium of cooperative.

In Acharya's view, the understanding of democracy and the vision of the ideal form of a cooperative society could be better imparted to farmers by the means of a cooperative movement. Although Narendra Dev ardently supported protecting the interests of the farmers, he was against the idea of his contemporary leaders, encouraging agriculturism. Acharya considered it an obstacle to the establishment of a Socialist set-up because of its narrow outlook. He wanted to raise class conflict on a broad platform on which farmers and labourers, could come together to establish the Socialist set-up, with the objective of a classless society. This is why Acharya wanted

Congress to be successful in this endeavour, by recognition to the institutions working for the farmers and the labourer, thus establishing their representation in Congress through their collective membership. Since 1934, Narendra Dev had been making efforts for giving concrete shape to this vision.

When Acharya became the President of the Provincial Congress in 1936, in his presidential address, he remarked; "only by associating the daily economic struggle of the public with the fight against imperialism can the public be geared up to actively participate in the national movement." But Acharya efforts could not be successful, through the medium of Congress. Though the Congress could not basically agree with Acharya's ideas. Yet behind this lay the influence of Gandhi, Nehru, Socialist thinkers in Congress and some others.

There was another significant reason behind the increasing influence of the farmers in Congress. The way that Gandhi led the struggle for freedom and the strategies adopted integrated not only the farmers but all those who were poor, had remained deprived of educational facilities and did not understand intellectual ideas and principles. The general Indian public yearned for emancipation, without a solution in sight. Such illiterate poor were much attracted to Gandhi's simplicity, morality, ethical-conduct non-accumulative tendency. Emulating so far as possible, these qualities of Gandhiji, Narendra Dev emphasised on programmes to educate the farmers. He could foresee the difficulties in establishing a socialist order, without education. An illiterate society would not be strong. In a crisis, it would not endure but disintegrate.

The way in which the illiterate poor of various provinces, a majority of them farmers, had worked to make the non-cooperation movement successful, had impressed the leaders. Gandhiji had worked a miracle and Narendra Dev was anxious to establish this enthusiasm actively towards the establishment of a socialist order. Such a foresighted approach rescued the farmers

orthodox agriculturism. It brought them to the fore of farmers movement, along with other powerful groups of those exploited.

Narendra Dev was nominated as the President of the Gaya session of All India Farmers Assembly in 1939. Prof. N.G. Ranga was then, the Minister of Farmers Assembly. Both were aggressive nationalists and well-known freedom-fighters. They shared the goal of opposing feudalism and the abolition of zamindari. Both agreed that cooperation between congress and the farmers associations was vital to the success of the fight for freedom. Narendra Dev did not experience any difficulty in clarifying the program of farmers assembly. In this connection, the name of Swami Sahajanandji of Bihar needs special mention. In his speech on the occasion, Narendra Dev made it clear that Congress had became the symbol of the freedom of the nation. As it is in the forefront of the fight against imperialism, therefore, organisations farmers must cooperate with the Congress, to get rid of colonial oppression and rule. He also asked the Congress to ponder the possibility of providing a national base to the farmers and their organisation and through their representation, promote national progress. Through the farmers, Acharya pointed out, the benefits of abolishing zamindari and provided a moral and economic base to the farmers movement. Several new-old activists of socialist views joined him, to contribute usefully to the farmers movement.

There is a long history to the farmers movements in India, though the period of turmoil was brief. It is not pertinent to mention here as to how the communist influence fostered it and how the communists weakened it internally. However, Narendra Dev could not imagine Indian socialism without the farmers. Therefore, his main program, of organizing them from time to time and along with the labourers class, infusing national consciousness in them and preparing them for the class-conflict, continued.

The farmers Union founded by Swami Sahajanandji in 1946 later developed by the name of *Kisan Panchayat Sanghathan Samiti*, with the purpose of bringing together the farmers and the labour-class. Dr. Ram Manohar became its President. Even before the session of socialist party in March 1949 at Patna, where this committee was formed, a session of Uttar Pradesh *Kisan Panchayat* had already taken place at Kanpur under the chairmanship of Narendra Dev. He had advised the farmers to get organised for a society free of exploitation.

In 1949, under the combined leadership of the Socialist Party and the *Kisan Panchayat*, a massive demonstration by farmers had taken place in Lucknow. At the time, this author was present at Lucknow and had witnessed the dismay of Acharya against the demonstrator slogan, 'farmers awakened, Pant fled.' Acharya's values and modesty could not bear it and he ordered them to stop chanting this slogan. Mr. Pant was then out of Lucknow. It cannot be assumed that he had left, to avoid the demonstration or having to accept the petition. It could have been an official tour, for administrative work. However, after the demonstration, the petition was stuck on the secretariat wall. The demonstration was against the compensation to the zamindars, proposed by the zamindari abolition committee, presided over by Mr. Pant. Acharya was against the planned zamindari abolition fund, holding the view that the zamindars not to be compensated so amply. He favoured as compensation, maximum thirty acres and minimum twelve and a half acres of agricultural land.

It is a matter of regret that in those days, out of enthusiasm for fulfilling Congress-announced assurance and separating farmers from Congress to link them with the labourers in class-conflict, none paid heed to some important points. At the time, none pondered on the issue of, how much and how rapidly would the environment of the country and its base, forests, suffer damage by the demand of land for the villager, assuming him to be a farmer only, and also the custom policy of abolition of the

zamindari. The oppression of farmers was widely reported. Several investigation reports were also presented but there has not been any investigation till date about how, considering the bill for abolition of zamindari. Zamindars were encouraged to wipe-out green fruit-gardens overnight.

The establishment of a Socialist order cannot be successful if the farmers do not join in. Many heeded this point but observing the trend for the increasing population and knowing well since Mughal rule, Indian farming has remained the mainstay for livelihood, none pondered seriously as to how, without increasing the radius, Indian farm land could be suitably changed for industries, without it being rendered lifeless, burdened by the excess population. Suitable arrangements be made for industries to make those who are not or cannot be farmers, effective labour.

Narendra Dev was advocating cooperative farming in villages while Chaudhary Charan Singh opposed it vehemently. Since he was in power, not only did he oppose cooperatives but also effectively rendered useless, any inclination for cooperatives in Uttar Pradesh.

The vision of Narendra Dev, to always maintain a balance between the farm produce and the prices of consumable material produced by mills, also could not find pragmatic support. In this regard, one remembers Sampoornanand's comment that if Narendra Dev and some other socialist thinkers had remained in power, in the Constituent Assembly, central and regional administration then the foundation of socialism would have been laid, in this country too. There would have been clarity in ideas and objectives would have been more in public interest. But what to discuss now that which did not happen then.

Acharya pondered the labour problems in his own way. Opposed totally to the mere trade union mentality, he wanted to link the middle class revolutionary thinkers and workers with it.

In his opinion, the thinkers could impact the message of socialism and the workers could rescue the farmers and labour class from the age old mentality of fatalism. Sampoornand considered the very word 'fate' as unIndian and despised those working with faith, the fatalists. Narendra Dev also wanted to expel the fatalism from the psyche of farmers-labourers. He wanted them to be suitably aware of and adequately informed about their potential, duties and rights.

Acharya never focused on casteism so far as the question of exploitation was concerned. There are only two classes the oppressor and the oppressed and these include people of all castes. Addressing the Panch assembly at Lucknow, Narendra Dev observed, "an oppressed labourer blames the high-castes for the economic hegemony. He is unable to see that the oppressor and the oppressed are divided into both high as well as low castes, some few or more. The rural poor thinkers in terms of caste only. We have to exhort the oppressed rural public to set aside, the distinctions of caste, clan and community, for establishing a combined front against the oppressor class.

Acharya Narendra Dev considered the economic, social, political and moral training of the labour class, as essential. In his opinion, the labour class should be educated about the contemporary economic, social and political situations and also the political, economic and social objectives and the values of socialism. They should be encouraged to think about the problems of the country, rising above the narrow sentiments of communalism and casteism. Their cultural life should be refined to the extent possible. Help should be provided to them in awakening and developing their natural and moral inspirations and they should be motivated towards practicing the democratic cooperative work-procedure. (Mukutbihari 261)

In Acharya's opinion, the effort to gain moral and spiritual distinction was an integral part of class conflict. He was of the view that the fight of socialism has expectations of the moral

evolution of the labour class. If we consider capitalism despicable on moral grounds, then we should provide the society with a new vision, on a moral level. Acharya believed that the bourgeoisie need confidence, dignity and liberty more than the daily bread. Narendra Dev was opposed to divisions in labour organisations.

In the beginning of the twentieth-century, when the mill labour of India organised itself under a trade-union, hope grew that this labour-organisation can be strengthened as a front against the oppressors but soon, with vested interests, there was trifurcation. It made Acharya unhappy that opportunistic leaders were misleading the labourers, by their divide and rule policy. He believed in the revolutionary power of the labour class and also that labour organisations could become a great political power, but, for this, he considered it essential that the labour be included in the entire imperialism fight of Congress. He considered as self-destructive the communist policy of keeping the labour-class away from the national struggle for freedom being waged by the Congress. It was Acharya's belief that then, the labour-class would become neither a political force nor benefit the country in any way.

In Narendra Dev's vision of democratic socialism, the combined front of the farmers and labourers could become a partner in progress and national interest only by advancing on the path of moral upliftment and becoming an educated community. For this, he always laid emphasis on hard work, self-study, training and selfless leadership.

Cooperation with Administration

Acharya Narendra Dev was a determined and idealistic statesman, who never compromised on his principles. He was also an educationist, scholar, philosopher, a patron of culture and one who promoted deeper understanding of Indian history. There were few such talented men at the time and Narendra Dev soon gained a reputation as a good statesman. His role as a freedom-fighter under Gandhi's leadership will always be remembered. When Acharya entered politics, he accepted first Tilak then Gandhi's leadership for their ideals and emulating such virtues, his independent reasoning sought its own path too. Consequently, Acharya became active in the Congress Socialist Party. After its formation, he distanced himself from Congress.

Acharya was perceived as a Congress-opposing leader, in his role of validating socialism, its explanation and the analysis of its Indian form and being at the fore in introducing it to the society. Since he was basically from the Congress, few recognised the shortcoming in Congress policies, more than him. Even in the assembly, he did not accept entry to the Constituent Assembly. Although Narendra Dev's views on supporting the entry into assembly have been mentioned elsewhere, its mention is relevant here as it brings to fore, that aspect of his personality which was liberal and in the interest of the nation as well as the society. Narendra Dev's differences in principle with Congress have been mentioned above, yet it should be remembered that he had been chosen as the President of the Provincial Congress Committee in 1936, and on Jawaharlal's invitation, was also a member of the national executive committee. He was supervising the Congress policies not only at the provincial level, but also regulating them at the national level. In view of the fact that for

a long time while being at the highest posts in Congress, he had leadership opportunities, to say that he had always opposed Congress programmes and policies would be unfair. With Acharya in such a position while opposing certain policies and programmes of Congress, it would have to be accepted that he was treating the patient and sometimes, to cure one, a bitter medicine also has to be administered.

Perhaps there was no basic distinction between Narendra Dev's explanation of Socialism and Gandhi's vision of '*Ramrajya*'. Either Acharya was acting out the role of a disguised Buddhist or Gandhiji himself was attempting to inculcate socialism in people along with values. One treatment was long term, acting slowly, the other looked scientific and was modern, like surgery, in the hope for immediate relief. One had the identity, texture and the productive power of Indian soil while the other was the Indian version of an imported seed. Yet there was little difference, if any, between the external and inner composition of Narendra Dev and Gandhiji. A direct expression of his devotion to Congress was the white Gandhi Cap that adorned his head all his life. It was the natural inclination of his Indian nature and value-based equanimity that despite having quit Congress, on being requested, Narendra Dev would actively cooperate in those programmes of Congress that were being planned and implemented, for the benefit of the nation and the society. The conjecture would be useless that despite two such opportunities, Narendra Dev yet could not become Congress President and if he had become one, perhaps he would not have quit the Congress. After independence, in 1947, if he had become the Congress President, as Gandhi willed, this issue would still be open. However even if it had happened, Acharya still would not have turned away from his independent ideas. In Acharya's opinion, if the welfare of the nation and society lay in his separation from Congress, then he would not have

hesitated in forsaking Congress and Gandhi though, even then his ties of affection with both would have endured.

Gandhiji was Narendra Dev's ideal, a man of values. Despite differences in opinions, Acharya's affection never waned. Jawaharlal and Pant are shining examples of this. The point is that Narendra Dev's personality was distinguished by the characteristic that despite opposing views, he would not let his relationships suffer at the personal and social level. As it is, his liberal heart was keen to maintain relations despite losses. Actually, he would remain on good terms and not foster bitterness even towards those because of whom he might have suffered.

These personality traits make it easy to understand the cooperation that Narendra Dev extended to administration despite opposition on principles. The situation of a Congress administration or complete autonomy came about in 1946 but such an opportunity had been there in 1936-37 as well. Acharya was strongly opposed to Congress constituting a council of ministers, yet he helped Jawaharlal in preparing the 1936 election manifesto. He himself kept away from the constitution of the council of ministers. When the Congress council of ministers decided to release the political prisoners and the Governor wanted to use his special privileges to block this move, the Congress council of ministers resigned. This also happened in Bihar. Acharya strongly supported this move of the council of ministers. Later, after the Governor's reassurances, these council of ministers were reconstituted.

Although not in the Congress council of ministers, Narendra Dev, as a member of the Congress Socialist Party, forcefully supported Congress in socialist policies and public welfare activities. His independent opinion was against Congress forming a council of ministers but once the majority decided in its favour, his discipline made him suppress his personal views, to support administration.

Although not in Congress, Acharya yet extended his cooperation for the suitable causes and genuine issues. In the capacity of an opponent, he did not consider it appropriate to oppose only for the sake of opposing. His idealism was such that when he quit Congress in 1948, he resigned from the Assembly seat as well, since he had been elected to it, on a Congress ticket. This is corroborated by his friend, Sampoornanand in a memoir. In his words, "in our country, unfortunately even now, the situation is such that where there are serious political differences, bitterness creeps in. Not just this but due to the political differences, people are loath to cooperate with each other even on the issues which, from the view of principles, are totally unconnected to political groupism. Both these factors did not count with Narendra Dev. Twice, elections were held in which Congress and Socialist Party which later became *Praja Socialist Party*, fought each other yet our mutual amity remained intact. It must have been our weakness but it is true that not once did Narendra Dev come to my constituency for a speech and neither did I visit his. There was no contract between us, just the inspiration in our hearts from our behaviour towards each other, none could fathom the differences between us."

After Shimla Conference, finding the British assurances 'uncertain, insufficient and unsatisfactory,' Congress participated in the elections and in its election declaration, made clear, the demand, for complete autonomy, several economic reforms and the objective of zamindari-abolition. Acharya Narendra Dev also participated in these elections. He was a member of the Legislative committee of his province and his contribution in the election of congress candidates from this province was impressive. The Congress candidates chosen from his province, to the Legislative assembly were mostly from his group. He himself won from Faizabad, Sitapur, Behraich city area, with a thumping majority. He was offered a ministerial berth but he did not appreciate Congress leanings towards constitutionalism and

refused to accept position. It was Narendra Dev's opinion that for the independence of the nation, one more revolutionary battle remained to be fought yet he cooperated with the administration as and when the occasion demanded.

In 1947, Sampoornanand was the Education Minister in Uttar Pradesh administration. India had gained independence. Hindi was being touted as the national language, for communication purpose, therefore, it was decided that the Nagari script be uniformly reformed in a manner that makes it more beautiful for typewriting and printing and it should be pragmatic in form, on a universal scale. For this, administration particularly Sampoornanand requested Acharya to be the president of the committee to be constituted, in this regard. Narendra Dev himself considered Hindi quite capable of becoming the state language, the language of communication. He believed that only Hindi could dispense the responsibility of state work and uniting the country. Therefore, Acharya accepted the offer and devotedly cooperated with this work of administration. This author also got the opportunity to work with him in the committee, in the capacity of a member secretary.

Another proof of Narendra Dev's cooperation is provided by Sampoornanand who wrote, "since 1936, my differences with the Congress Socialist Party, to the birth of which, I had also contributed began and increased steadily" but these differences on principle never affected the personal relations of these two great men. In 1938, the Uttar Pradesh government constituted two committees, for reforms in the elementary education system and the secondary-level education system. Narendra Dev became the president of the committee for reforms in the secondary level education system, "on 13 April, 1938, the government declared that these two committees would work as sub-committees of a joint committee. This joint committee conducted a thorough investigation with regard to the revamp of the education system in the United Provinces in the spheres of

elementary and secondary-level education. The report was prepared on 13 February, 1939. Acharya Narendra Dev was the president of this joint committee.

In May 1938, under Sampoornanand, the Education Minister, another committee was constituted, to investigate the functioning of the Lucknow, Allahabad and Agra universities. Later this committee was divided into two sub-committees. One was entrusted with the task of investigating the functioning of the Lucknow and Allahabad universities Acharya Narendra Dev was appointed its chairman. In the absence of the Education Minister, Sampoornanand, Acharya was to chair the joint meeting of both the sub-committees as well.

Despite the resignation of Congress government, in November, 1939, over the question of Indian participation in the Second World War, the work of the committees continued, keeping Acharya busy. "In December, 1940, the draft of the first two parts of the report of the committee, was distributed among its members. Yet the committee could not deliberate on it since most of its members were in jail. In June 1941, the third part of the report was also sent to the members. On 16 July 1941, the recommendations were published in the provincial gazetteer. The entire report was also published along with a note that the committee had not duly approved it in a meeting. The Chairman of the Committee, Sampoornanand objected to the publication of such a draft. On 25 November 1941, he wrote to the secretary of the committee to call its meeting but the government of United Provinces informed that the committee had been disbanded, in November 1940 only, therefore the issue of calling its meeting does not arise at all."

Thus, this work proved almost futile. In 1946, Congress again formed government. This time too, realising the need for reforms in secondary-level education, the then Education Minister, Sampoornanand wrote, "I could not think of a chairman better suited for this task than Narendra Dev. I requested him and he

accepted the offer. We both had to face criticism, but I considered this move appropriate for the welfare of the province. Narendra Dev found it suitable to accept my offer with generosity and courage, in the interest of the province. There is a need that we, engaged in the political sphere, thus learn, to rise above the party-considerations for the work of nation-building, knowing well should the task be creditworthy, most credit would go to the government and the Congress Party. It was no feat of ordinary moral courage to still accept my offer."

The interest of the country and the entire society was of prime importance to Narendra Dev. He cooperated with all and sundry for the welfare of the society and the nation. He took on, the responsibility of the Sanskrit Education Committee but could not finish this task in his lifetime. Acharya believed that without recognising the past and correct knowledge, the future could not be envisaged properly. Therefore, Narendra Dev believed the education and knowledge of Sanskrit to be essential for the Indians.

Outside the province and whenever the central administration needed assistance, Narendra Dev gave it unhesitantly. He agreed to become the chairman of the Osmania University Committee, but his deteriorating health did not permit this. However, he still accepted Maulana Azad's request to become the Chancellor of Kashi University, despite his failing health. Acharya soon became popular amongst the teachers as well as students. He adorned the offices of Vice-Chancellor of both, Lucknow and Kashi universities.

As Prof. Mukutbihari Lal remarked, "the students were aware of his goodwill towards them and were proud of their vice-chancellor's personality and calibre. In this era of freedom, hardly any vice-chancellor attracted students like Acharya did. Perhaps, in the world-history, no Vice-Chancellor has received such regard and affection from students as Acharya Narendra Dev did, when he left Lucknow University for Banaras

University. On one hand, the students of Lucknow university were not ready to let him go, getting restless and upset. On the other hand, the students of Banaras Hindu university were quite eager to welcome him. On reaching Kashi, he was accorded such a grand welcome by the students as had never been given at Kashi to any other scholar or leader except Gandhiji. While Acharya was at Kashi, the students remained loyal even in his absence, they considered it their duty to be disciplined. The biggest proof of this was the quietude of the students of Banaras Hindu university in 1953 during Acharya's absence even when there erupted controversy and quarrels between Lucknow and Prayag universities, over the system of student unions. At the time, Narendra Dev was sick, in Lucknow. Yet, the students of Banaras Hindu university held their peace, loath to be anything that would ill-affect the health of their Vice-Chancellor."

Narendra Dev: Buddhist Religion and Philosophy

Why did Buddhism attract Narendra Dev so? This question is all the more pertinent in case of this individual, whose childhood and youth was spent in the devotional atmosphere of *sanatana dharma*, whose house was frequented by scholars, mostly of this sect, and Vedanta, who had been exposed to religious debates. Instead of being attracted to such philosophy, for him to develop an interest in *veda*-opposing philosophy and then, to study it in-depth and analyse, is surprising to say the least and invites exploration of causes for the same. To understand why he became so inclined towards Buddhist religion and philosophy, the life and character of Lord Buddha would have to be observed and Narendra Dev's character-distinctions. In this perspective, the personality-evolution of Acharya would have to be considered as well.

Lord Buddha was born in Shakya clan and his *gotra* lineage was *Gautam*. He was named Sidhartha. King Shudhodhana was his father. In those days, the warrior class, *kshatriyas*, were dominant particularly in Eastern India. There was rivalry between the *kshatriyas* and the Brahmins, the priests, *purohits* not ready to consider the former superior in any way. It appears as if the influence of the story of sages, *Vishvamitra* and *Vashistha* still held sway. This is why, in 'Pali-Nikaya,' the *kshatriyas* have been given the first place in count of 'varnas' system of division of society into classes. Sidhartha's father followed the *Vedic* religion and so Sidhartha received *Vedic* education with essential knowledge of the *Upanishads*.

It was but natural for the highly intelligent Sidhartha to be curious about the mysteries of life and the world. When the bent

of mind is such, there is a sense of detachment from the worldly pleasures. In Siddhartha's case, this unrest became so acute that for the search of the supreme truth, he donned ascetic's garb and with a *bhikshu's* detachment, of renunciation departed from home.

Narendra Dev writes, "in those days, there were many popular monks. One such monk, Kaala Deval used to visit Siddhartha's father. Coming to know of an ascetic *Arau Kaalam*, at *Bimb Prakoshtha*, Siddhartha went there to ask, how to become free from old age, death and disease. Arau cited the explanation from the scriptures. He explained about the origin of the world and its expanse. Teaching about the elements, he also told him ways to achieve a *Brahmacharya* basis. However, Arau's teaching did not satisfy Siddhartha.

Siddhartha then visited the ashram of Udrak Ramputra but did not accept his philosophy of Sankhya-yoga, a non-theist system. Still restless, in quest of the supreme peace, Siddhartha came to Uruvela and resided on the banks of the river, Neranjana. There he pondered, "I also have faith, diligence, and the requisite devotion. I will explore religion, dharma myself."

What an engrossing tale. With Acharya's penmanship, it showcases the era i.e. the *Upanishad* age, though in short. A dimension of *mahidas* tale also appears here when he had channelised his attention to a focus by meditation and entered the high state of 'Samadhi.' But whither the satisfaction? *Nachiketa* gained the information of *dharma* i.e. cause-effect of rules, *yama*-old age-death. Lord Buddha also considered it essential to explore dharma, religion by direct experience. During the first phase of the night, he gained knowledge of previous births, in the second, divine purity of vision and in the last phase of night, he witnessed the twelve dimensions of substance-less reality. At dawn, he glimpsed directly, the absolute knowledge. Such was his intellectual evolution. From that time, he began to be called a Buddha. When he witnessed the absolute knowledge, Lord

Buddha remarked, “repeated birth is indeed suffering! O House-builder, you are seen! You will not build this house again, for your rafters are broken and your bridge pole shattered. My mind has reached the unconditioned, I have attained the destruction of craving.”

An illustration from another discourse by Lord Buddha would be interesting and pertinent here. Since his teachings were for the masses, Buddha preached in *Pali*, the common man’s language then. Acharya comments, “Buddha’s preachings remind of text from the *Upanishads*. A major distinction of Buddha’s teachings was its universal form. This is why, Buddhism could spread to such a large area simultaneously. He discovered the path to salvation but it was open to all. He believed that birth is not a determinant of one’s status.”

In *vrishal-sutra (Sutta-nipat)*, Lord Buddha comments: “None is born a Brahmin, actions make a low-caste, actions make a Brahmin. O Brahmin! know this history that it is known that as low-caste man’s (Shvapak) son, Matang gained such name and fame that several *kshatriyas* and *Brahmins* frequented his place. Ultimately, he ascended to heaven. His caste proved to be no barrier to his evolution.”

In *Ashvalayan Sutta*, a Brahmin Manvak said to Lord Buddha, “O Gautama! Brahmins say that Brahmin is the supreme class, other classes are inferior; Brahmins only are pure, not non-Brahmins. Brahmins are the real sons of *Brahma*, having been created from his mouth. What do you say on this matter?”

Lord Buddha replied, “O Ashvalayan! Have you heard that in Yavana Kamboj and other provinces and districts, there are two *varnas*-aryas and slaves. Slaves from *arya* and *arya* from, slaves?”

“Yes, so I have heard.”

“O Ashvalayan! What powers do Brahmins have that they speak of Brahmins as the superior class (*varna*) and other

classes as inferior. Do you believe that because of their austerity, only the Brahmins are created in heaven not *kshatriyas*, *Vaishyas* and *Shudras*?

“No, Gautama.”

“Do you believe that only Brahmins are able to feel compassion, only Brahmins can bathe in a river, ridding themselves of bodily impurities. What do you say on this matter? If a kshatriya youth co-habits with a Brahmin girl and a son is born to them, the son is like his father and like his mother as well. He should be called a Kshatriya and a Brahmin as well. O Ashvalayan, if a Brahmin youth co-habits with a Kshatriya girl and their son is born, then will the son not be called Kshatriya as well as a Brahmin?”

“Yes, so he will be addressed, Gautama.” “O, Ashvalayan! I consider all four classes (*varnas*) as pure. Casteism is not right.”

In *Sundrik-Bhardwaj Sutta*, Lord Buddha says, do not ask about caste, ask of conduct. Fire is created from the wood brought for the *havana*, holy offerings ceremony. Those of lowest or not so high a caste are also bright and superior.

In *Vashisisthaputta-sutta*, *Vashistha* and *Bhardwaj* came to Lord Buddha, claiming a difference of opinion over casteism. While Bhardwaj said a Brahmin is by birth, Vashistha said, by deeds. They requested Lord Buddha to please tell as to who is correct? Buddha asked, “in insects, genders are there, is it not so, in human beings? Among the human beings, he whose livelihood is protecting livestock, is a farmer; not a Brahmin. A trader earns his livelihood by business. The one, performing rites and rituals, for livelihood is a priest and one who exercises state-power is a king. However, a Brahmin is by penance, austerity, abstinence and not by matted hair, clan or birth. One who has truth and religion and purity is a Brahmin. Your inner self is full of darkness and you refine, yourself on the outside.” (The path to spiritual bliss was open to all). Lord Buddha’s teachings were practical. He told of ways to prevent misery.

Some teachings and ideas of Lord Buddha have been explained above. Now, certain issues of the life-philosophy of Acharya Narendra Dev are being quoted. As he put it; "each individual is a goal unto oneself and one must search for the path, satisfactory and complete from one's own perspective." Lord Buddha's last words conveyed the meaning that all the world is impermanent. Strive tirelessly for own salvation. Be a lamp unto yourself.

The similarity in the views of both, Acharya Narendra Dev and Lord Gautama Buddha provides a glimpse into Acharya's inner psyche since as he himself observes, "only such work can provide pleasure as is inspired by the depth of its origin." Acharya's convictions also came from deep within his heart. He was not preaching but putting his ideas to test, through his actions in life. He was not one to accept anybody's ideas be it Lord Buddha's even, without it passing the touchstone of his independent thinking. As if writing about his own life-philosophy, Narendra Dev remarks, "the traditional values of life should not be accepted without due analysis." Acharya had his criteria of accepting or rejecting values. Believing society to be a dynamic force of human beings, he was always ready to accept challenges.

As Acharya commented, "if we want, comfortable life, less pain and struggles that weigh us down and to face the challenges of our time, we will have to set new standards of social values. Others can only assist and guide but we will have to make the effort ourselves." This was also the ideal of Gautama, the Buddha. He considered man to be the product of social and contemporary circumstances and environment. Buddha had himself given new meaning to the human objectives of the preceding ages, redefined and re-evaluated them, according to the contemporary social conditions. Narendra Dev agreed that the connotations of human objectives have been different in

different ages, being constantly redefined and re-evaluated according to the changing circumstances.

Acharya was able to contemplate the capable great universal form of the human race, the human being. Instead of being dedicated to the uplift of community or caste in particular, Narendra Dev thought about the welfare of the entire human race. As he remarked, "we will spread the message of human unity and cooperation, in all directions." All caste and national bondings will have to be uprooted and man will have to explore himself in-depth if he is to save himself from being completely destroyed." He further added, "for me, a true life, today, means active participation in a meaningful movement for social reorganisation in common interest." Lord Buddha had also dedicated himself to universal welfare.

For a man of Narendra Dev's background and distinction, to be inclined towards the Buddhist religion and philosophy was not only natural but also meant to give a new message to humanity by its devoted observation. He wanted to protect his countrymen from negativism. He desired to rescue them from conservatism, by presenting a clear picture of the ideals and aims of life. As he exhorted, "we should reject those ideologies which make us fatalistic or present a dim view of life. We Indians have became used to believing in such pessimistic ideas that portray life as an empty dream...., such philosophy and discipline can do us no good."

Narendra Dev was becoming increasingly opposed to the traditional individualistic culture in which religion, policing, economy, salvation all had came to rest on individualism as their base and competition with each other had taken roots. Rising above separatism and selfish interests, he had begun contemplating, the unity of the entire human race and its economic and cultural uplift.

Clarifying his views, Narendra Dev comments, "if the society is to be kept alive, then, the despicable selfish and competitive streak of the society desirous only of profit, will have to be sacrificed." The importance of the individual cannot be rejected completely out-of-hand, hence in this regard, he remarks," it is not that individual is not important and does not have a life of his own but he is just a cog in the machine. He is not a slave of the machine, instead, he can operate the machine with discretion, in his own and the society's interest, provided there is social awareness and the individual has sincerely observed his environment and its problems, comprehending himself as an integral part of the community life."

During his student life, Narendra Dev had come under the influence of certain well known teachers who were not only experts in their field but also humanitarians, of great distinction. Besides, Acharya had became familiar with new expressions and principles of society and sociology. He had developed a special interest in Indian history and archaeology. While studying these, Acharya gained knowledge of Pali, Prakrit and French languages. As a result with the support of such mental as well as intellectual background, he ultimately became inclined towards Buddhist religion and philosophy. In it, he could clearly see the distinct possibility of his ideals and ideas finding nourishment. Consequently Narendra Dev made the Buddhist philosophy and religion in context of Indian philosophy, the subject of his self study and explored these intensively, during leisure, for his famous book, *Bodh Dharma Darshan*, collecting material while at Ahmadnagar Fort, under house arrest.

Regarding his academic pursuits, it is pertinent to quote Acharya, "while under house arrest at the Ahmadnagar fort, I had translated *Abhidharma-kosha* from French into Hindi language. This book is quite significant. In my opinion, without its study, good knowledge of the Buddhist philosophy is not possible.

This is the main book of *Sarvastiwad*, according to *Vaibhashiknay*. After completing this task for scientific study, I prepared a summary of 'Vigyaptimatrata Sidhi' of Huan-Tsang. On *Mahayana-Sutralenkar*, *Vinshika* and *Trinshika* of the several commentaries by Acharya Vasubandhu, on *Trinshika*, only the commentary on *sthirmati* is available. Huan T sang's 'vigyaptimatrata Sidhi' is in Chinese language. This book is an independent one, not the Chinese translation of any Sanskrit scripture. This book is of immense significance, since it is based on the several commentaries on *Trinshika*. A scholar, Pussen, had translated this into French language but this book has not been translated into other languages. I have studied '*Abhidhammath Sangraho*', (*Abhidharma Mata Sangraha*), '*Visudhimaggo*' (*Vishudh Marg*), its commentary written by Dharmpal '*Parmarth Manjusha*'.

Until he collected its material at the Ahmadnagar fort, Acharya had not planned to write a detailed book himself, on the Buddhist religion and philosophy, but for how long could such study, thinking and deliberation lie dormant, it had to find expression. However, it is unfortunate that it could not be expressed in such detail as was its potential. If he had only lived longer after the publication of his '*Bodh Dharma Darshan*', he would have provided even richer material to Hindi readers.

Narendra Dev had earned the wisdom of Buddhist religion and philosophy, amidst adversities, as is clear from his life. In other words, he had gained it with much hard work yet made himself second-to-none, on the subject. The reasons for his attraction to the subject have been pointed out above, but there is no doubt that his study and knowledge of History and Indian culture, Archaeology and Pali language and grammar, helped him a lot in presenting this subject (on which, not much material was accessible then). In those days, few scholars at national and international level, were making efforts to make the Buddhist philosophy available in format for publication.

In the words of Jagannath Upadhyaya, “Acharya Narendra Dev advanced alone in the familiar direction of this study yet he gained the fundamental knowledge of the entire *Tripitaka* and *Anupitaka* literature. Acharya’s serious essays are proof that he studied those portions of ‘*Abhidharma Pitaka*’ intensively, which despite availability, are not being studied well, even today, in India. Due to its complexities, the study of *Shamayayan* (*Samadhi*) of *Shivirwad* is being almost ignored even in the foreign monasteries. Beside the basic books on this topic, Acharya also studied thoroughly and wrote essays on the topic. For this, he sought the assistance of Sinhalese and Burmese scriptures.

With regard to the Buddhist religion and philosophy, Acharya had the unique distinction of having studied from the original Sanskrit scriptures, *Mahayana* philosophy beside the nuances and complexities of the philosophy and religion of *sthriwwad* and the *Hinayana*. Narendra Dev studied *Mahayana* philosophy also on the basis of French and English work on it. Acharya Narendra Dev had completed the study of these sects of Buddhist religion and philosophy by 1933-34. The time is mentioned since it is important in the context of his later political ideas.

Several people paid tribute to Acharya Narendra Dev. In highlighting his socialist inclinations, it has been observed that like Engles, Acharya too found “certain moral rules and ideas sustainable but he also believed that in this dynamic and changing world, moral rules and principles also change with the social conditions and moral ideals are closely related to the social ones.” Acharya basically accepted the moral analysis of Engles, like him he also believed that the moral code changes with the social order.”

Analysing the socialist views of Narendra Dev, several observed the influence of the thinkers Marx, Engels, Rosa Luxembourg and Tolstoy etc. and investigated the same. It is true that the later half of Narendra Dev’s life was spent, elucidating

socialism, its democratic form, Indian perspective and attempts to propagate it. Acharya appeared impressed by Marx's life philosophy. This is true but in itself, it does not completely verify the superiority, completeness, sources and bases of his ideas. It would be a lop sided view of Acharya's life.

Upadhyaya has correctly cautioned that "the casual and coordinated opinions, of his later life, would have to be viewed in comparison with the earlier phase. From this, it also becomes clear quickly enough that by his self study through 1933-34, the way in which Acharya pursued the study of the Buddhist religion and philosophy, it had prepared the cultural roots of his life, based on a liberal morality which had been tested in '*Bodh Darshan ka Tej*' the culture that comprehensively influenced Acharya had its appeal permeated by the unrestricted flow of the *Tathagat's* compassion.

If Narendra Dev had not studied extensively, the Pali language and grammar and the Buddhist philosophy, he would not have described so magically, the moral aspect of Marxism nor would he have provided a new version of the ancient spiritual Indian values.

Buddhist philosophy provides the vision to understand human psyche, discover its secrets and analyse its actions and reactions. It bestows the power on man to understand and change according to circumstances, in the welfare of the society. It is also, the philosophy opposing blind belief in scriptures, Vedas and casteism. It provides the power to assess anew, the ancient beliefs and always keep man on the humane and social plane. Behind Narendra Dev's opinions lay the knowledge of Buddhist philosophy which never faded, nor did he view the Indian culture as a thing apart. In his sociological ideas and the democratic socialism that Acharya expounded, a clear identity of the ideals of Buddhist philosophy is discovered. A righteous statement about Narendra

Dev that “despite his faith in Buddhism, he was not an atheist,” is veritable proof of his being an independent enlightened philosopher.

Gopinath Kaviraj says, of the ideal Buddhist philosophy, “not salvation (*nirvana*) or ridding oneself of miseries but to continuously serve the beings is the ideal of *Bodhisattva*’s life.”

Concluding his article, ‘my life philosophy’, Acharya Narendra Dev writes, “we have to choose between the two options- whether we will serve humanity whole heartedly or protect only our conservative class interests. For me, today truly living means, to actively participate in a meaningful movement of social reorganisation, for general welfare.”

The extent to which the Buddhist religion and philosophy impressed Narendra Dev can be glimpsed in an article by Jagannath Upadhyaya who writes, “Acharya’s life was much influenced by the moral perspective of Buddhism. Several verses from Arya Shantidev’s ‘*Bodhicharyavtar*’ were quite dear to him. He would often recite them before his friends and inspire them to read it. One of Shantidev’s verses, which was a favorite of Acharya, contained the meaning, ‘when the entire world is miserable with suffering, then why should I alone revel in attainment of enlightenment.’ The development of right moral conduct (*sila*) into compassion and wisdom into compassionate knowledge (*pragya*), integrating these into the persona – the life philosophy of Buddhists, impressed Acharya much. He frequently deliberated on the Buddhist principles of authority and ridding the persona of egotism of the society.”

Acharya believed that “the logical and acceptable description of morality and spirituality in Buddhism, freed an individual, from blindly following the traditions and gave them the power of inspecting culture.” Narendra Dev’s morality expressed itself on the basis of this strong philosophical explanation. In the light of this, he had examined the various ancient explanations of moral

code and a unique picture of Indian culture was etched on his mind. The study of socialism, on the basis of this culture forced Narendra Dev to explore the moral explanation of socialising in the Indian scenario. This is the reason why Acharya elaborated on the Indian culture and Marxian socialism from Indian perspective, propounding the concept of non-conflict and essential co-ordination as well.

‘*Bodh Dharma Darshan*’ is Narendra Dev’s independent treatise on the subject. In its introduction, Pandit Gopinath Kaviraj states, “such a treatise is not available in any Indian language, not just Hindi. To my understanding there is no such treatise, even in any foreign language. The validity and uniqueness of this book also becomes clear in so far as Acharya while writing this has retained the direct, influence of the original scriptures of Buddhist philosophy. He has also adapted Buddhist terminology and form, for correct introduction to the Buddhist religion and philosophy, keeping their connotations intact.”

It appears that on the basis of Acharya’s comprehensive knowledge of complete works in Sanskrit language. Gopinath finds it appropriate to remark, “in the available Sanskrit books on Buddhist philosophy, there is not another treatise like this, to provide knowledge of the principles of all the branches of Buddhism.” Such an opinion makes it somewhat imperative to provide a brief introduction of this treatise. In this book of five volumes and twenty chapters, there is introduction and details of the practice of *Sthavirvad*, general beliefs of Buddhist philosophy including those of transience in the worldly existence, the fundamental teachings of Buddha, the language and spread of Buddhist philosophy, non-belief in God, path to salvation, destructivism, nihilism etc. Beside these, there is also a summary of Acharya Vasubandhu’s ‘*Abhidharma Kosha*’ (its full translation is given elsewhere), the translated language of Arya Asang’s ‘*Mahayana Sutralankar*’, a detailed essay on Huen Tsang’s

‘*vigyapatimatrata-sidhi*’ and translation, in brief, of Acharya Chandrakirti’s *Prasann Padavriti* is also available in this treatise. This is quite significant from today’s perspective and also the subject-matter. In the fifth part of this treatise, analysing the concept of justice in Buddhism, Narendra Dev has added a unique chapter on the elements of sky, day and time.

Beside this treatise, Acharya has contributed in various other ways to making available in Hindi language, the Buddhist philosophy. He has also translated some Buddhist scriptures. Translation work is usually painstaking but Acharya’s devotion to Buddhist religion and philosophy was so intense he found pleasure in this task too. As mentioned before, Narendra Dev translated Vasubandhu’s *Abhidharma kosha*, a famous scripture of *Sarvastiwad*. This particular scripture is much respected in the Buddhist world, since Vasubandhu in this commentary, had also mentioned the opinions of his predecessor-scholars. This translation work presents a shining example of Acharya’s scholastic ability and his deep understanding of the Buddhist philosophy.

Narendra Dev also translated into Hindi, an important book about belief in science, paving the way for its propagation. He translated *Abhidharmamath Sangraha* as well, from Pali to Hindi. Translating *Kshemendra*’s *Prakrit* grammar into Hindi, Acharya also wrote a commentary on it. Unfortunately, both these books were lost before publication. Hindi language is still bearing this loss and probably always will, since a scholar like Narendra Dev may hardly ever be born again.

Acharya aspired that the Buddhist philosophical works, available in the French language be translated into Hindi. If this had happened, then the propagation of Buddhist religion and philosophy would have been facilitated but as Jagannath Upadhyaya wrote in his tribute to Narendra Dev, “no matter how big a loss his death caused in the political sphere, for the

cause of Buddhist philosophy, it was definitely an irreparable damage.” Acharya’s close friend and associate, Sampoornanand and others often told him that “the country (India) may get several politicians but not a scholar like you. What you write, will be your unique contribution to the country and educated society.”

A Torch-bearer of Indian Culture

Culture usually means the conduct-behaviour of people of any nation, their way of living, dressing, food, customs, traditions, art etc. Often it is seen that in literary genres, drama etc. are organised and given the name of cultural programmes. Mural, engravings and decorative arts are also included in the category of culture.

It has been observed that piety, alms-giving etc., religious conduct are also associated with culture. If such conduct, inclinations, learning, behaviour etc. are observed carefully then a long list of customs and traditions may be compiled. All these are not only the vehicles of public opinion of the country but are also nurtured by the ideas behind it. These owe their origin also to the geographical location of the country. However, the reason of geographical location does not apply uniformly, to external factors of culture discussed above and others that may be added on, including all of these. Some are exceptions but the one factor that covers and flows in all the external manifestations of culture, is the intellect and traditions of the people of the place.

When ideas are put to the test of time and assume a definite form, they became associated with social life. Still, until such ideas are accepted by the society i.e. until it accepts and changes according to such conduct-behaviour, they do not form a basis for survival. Another dimension ascribed to ideas of this sort is their need for public platform as basis, to blossom. This makes it clear that there are two levels of culture in the analysis of its external manifestations. One is the folk-culture while the other is hard to define. Deliberating on this concept of culture, Narendra Dev also brings to fore, a new and meaningful aspect.

Acharya observes that, "when a philosophical idea blossoms, then it is intimately associated with life." As mentioned above, by the ideas thus formulated and developed, a connecting bridge is formed between the thinkers and the common masses. A flow is there, in exchange-of-opinions between the two. The shadow of even the most complex ideas of the philosophers are found in an easy form in the ceremonies and conduct behaviour in society, termed as the public-conduct.

As Narendra Dev remarks, "when there is a basic change in the original flow-of-thoughts, then it is not created by sheer wisdom, instead its real causes are inherent in the society." As an example, he presents the differences and distinctions between Mahayana and Hinayana in the Buddhist religion and indicates its social reasons.

Acharya's explanation and stand may have originated from his extensive study of the Buddhist religion but in the sphere of culture, the particular truth that he highlighted was that, in the formation of values or cultural factors, the philosophical ideas as well as its inherent causes in the society hold equal importance and values. This concept of social prestige and public opinion should be considered as the distinctive view of Acharya.

Deliberating on the word, 'sanskriti', although Acharya does not object to use of its synonym, 'culture, as its equivalent in English language, yet it appears that due to his appreciation of the power of language and its influence, he is hesitant to consider them as the same. He is sceptical about it as in the case of 'dharma' being considered the same as religion. An indication of this comes from his mention of another synonym of *Sanskriti*, in this context, an ancient arya word, used by Ravi Babu, the word 'vision'

Narendra Dev believed that "it is difficult to define the word 'sanskriti'. If we take the literal meaning, we can say that sanskriti is the cultivation of mental process. Since action

predominates mind therefore, the conclusion is that whose psyche is noble, his speech and body-language will also be cultured. As our vision shall be, so will our action be." This makes it clear that Acharya views the reasons for one's conduct in the perspective which one begets from the well-ordered and set way-of-thinking, from his time or before.

Narendra Dev talks about the folk-psyché even while discussing the superior role of philosophical concepts. As he puts it, "in ancient times, for an enlightened soul, it was only possible that he personally identifies with all the elements of the world and be full of compassion and lack animosity towards any being. However, his field of action was quite restricted, therefore this sentiment could only be applied to a small area in a functional way. But culture is not a stagnant stream, it needs a broader emotional base for development. It justifies itself by its expanse."

As Acharya remarks, "a folk-psyché evolves along with the psyche of individual." Folk psyche is created, keeps evolving, to eradicate the insecurities of persons, particular individual or thinker or philosopher. Indicating the comprehensiveness of '*sanskriti*,' the condition of its uniform nature in the society, Narendra Dev comments, "man is social, as his qualities are developed when he lives in the society, therefore uniformity is generated in several matters, in the society. Group's extend and a time comes when, inspired by the strong feeling of nationalism, all those living within the geographical boundaries of a country, experience unity in certain matters."

The explanation of the process of cultural unity is, Acharya's contribution whereby he mentions geographical territory, believing in the cause-and-effect relationship of geographical environment. This is national culture. Accepting the regional distinctions, Acharya yet emphasises more on the nationalistic aspects. To limit conservatism, Narendra Dev adds, 'the feeling of unity also permeates the space of the nation and advances towards the

concept of 'one world.' The dimensions that promote similarity also are the basis on which folk-psyche is formed. Today, different countries have their own folk-psyche as well, since almost similar life-style is prevailing the world over. Therefore, in certain spheres, the folk-psyche of different nations also begins resembling each other."

In the progress and the expansion of culture, ideas predominate. The exchange of ideas, formed on this basis are the medium of propagation of culture. The fact is emphasised that despite regional distinctions, cultures develop, influence each other, find common ground, transcending regional boundaries, to realise the dream, of the world being a big family of the beings inhabiting it.

While pondering over the issue of 'culture', Narendra Dev appears to see features of decay in it that distressed him. When a matter deteriorates inevitably, attention goes to its original form, its present form also flashes before the minds eye of the interval between the original and present form, a long period having passed, innumerable elements having contributed to the form of culture, constantly evolving, the deterioration is visible more to one who has comprehensive knowledge of its previous form and later composition.

Acharya had a bright way of observing and understanding the integral tradition of cultural development connected with the ancient Indian history. His study of western philosophy and culture was also extensive. This provided to him a comparative perspective affording him the vision of the symbols as well as the reasons of cultural decay, whereupon he remarks in English, "today, there is a need to refresh the folk-psyche and personal soul, according to life-values and the objectives and aims of efforts to fulfill the aspirations and ambitions of modern era. Today, some Asian countries have predominant nationalistic and democratic forces determining the conduct views and its effects are there for all to see, everywhere." Narendra Dev advocates

promoting and propagating democratic sentiments and national unity. He could foresee, how, external factors of culture were helping spread of conservatism and considered it dangerous for national integration. This is why, he commented, "but some opposing forces, as representing the old era, are blocking the path of development of the modern forces and obstructing our life. These forces have taken stand against the prevailing values of this era, wanting to direct the life-flow towards the past again. They want to trap our nations life-force into a stagnant pool, separating us from its integral mainstream. Each individual and country should mark these forces and oppose them.

Recognizing as the basis of culture, society or its people, Acharya desired to raise public life to such a height that co-ordination be established between the individual psyche and the folk-psyché. This would give a fresh lease to the folk-psyché, through philosophical ideas. In this context, the narrow dimension of the philosophical concept is not to be considered. Philosophical concepts of a country shape the religious conduct in its society, whereby the social order is strengthened, political forces assume a definite form and the principles of the state-order are formulated. On this basis, economy finds its footing which then propels the society towards increasing economic strength.

Society needs constant cultural uplift and unity. For this, Acharya finds the role of science, crucial. As Narendra Dev comments, "science has created new forces. It has given man, new dreams and set new ideals, symbols and objectives. In the light of science, social equations are changing rapidly. New means and instruments of internationalism are being presented. A universal identity is encompassing the entire world which is discovering its equilibrium. These forces will be successful since they aspire to fulfill the demands of the era."

However, when Acharya ponders the condition of India, his own nation, he is quite distressed by the realisation that neither individuals nor the folk-psyché have any faith in Indian

philosophies. At this, Narendra Dev cautions, unless there are basic changes in our educational system and science gets its rightful importance in it and life, we will not have faith in philosophy." The sole remedy is the spread of the knowledge of science, which can only happen with industrial progress in the country.

The history of the progress of the philosophical concepts in Europe, is documented chronologically. We can know its details but our country has not linked modern knowledge with the ancient one. An effort has been made to assess their common base, but deviations render such knowledge unrelated. Neither is any effort made to connect it to life. Such lacunae account for the lack of sobriety in this work.

Acharya cautions, "We must not forget that life changes along with culture. Life is not stable and constant therefore, culture is also not stable and constant. The economic and social life in the society is dynamic like culture. Several races came from outside into India and got assimilated in the society. They brought their lifestyle concepts and also sought to adopt ours, accepting our conduct and ideas too, while imparting theirs. Cultural exchanges occur through communication."

Narendra Dev did not consider culture, religion as composite. Slamming ignorance and bigotry, he remarks, "in the ancient times, when religion permeated and influenced the entire life, then, it also had a hand in formulating culture but (even then) other factors too, beside religion, assisted in the process. Today, however, the influence of religion has diminished."

Acharya sidelined the word, '*dharma*', not integrating it with sectarianism. However, to him, there is no conflict between religion and religious conduct, the latter is essential for the uplift of the society, country and prosperity. It is also necessary for cultural progress and emancipation. Narendra Dev laments that, "in one country, unfortunately people do not distinguish between

culture and religion. Ignorance, conservatism, and our not being enlightened enough are the reasons for this."

Defining religion, Acharya wrote, "Indian religion is liberal and vast. It is not for a particular community. The Indian religion that I have mentioned above has no original propounder, nor does it have any particular ceremonies or rituals that we can speak of, as its characteristic. It does not boast even a holy scripture as evidence. It adopts other holy scriptures as its own. This is the reason why it cannot be defined. As we say for the Brahmins, so can we say for this that it is not this religion but we cannot claim for sure what exactly is it. It has no definite stable form but is ever evolving. Though we cannot enumerate its traits, yet we experience its existence."

Acharya requests that culture and religion be viewed as distinct and there be awareness to recognise the forces whose influence creates and constantly evolves, culture. Narendra Dev also clarified that whereas the religion of the age should gain recognition, the search for harmony and co-ordination continue and courage and discretion be used as change does not at all mean that the past be ignored completely. This should not be. The excellent life-giving creative dimensions of the past will have to be protected but we will have to welcome new values and forsake the lifestyle, inappropriate and harmful for the age. Only then will the Indian culture be in constant flow and healthy.

Man of Distinctive Personality

The information gleaned about the persona of an individual, by his external appearance or body constitution is very sketchy. As the feelings of respect, faith, belief arise so also can fear, suspicion and doubts. As regards Narendra Dev's appearance, he was lightly built and agile, giving the impression of a simple and active boy who invited affection. However, the later half of Acharya's life was spent battling asthma. His energy was the electric particles of the unique brilliance emanating from his intelligence and free spirit. Knowledge gained from teachers with immense patience, passed through Acharya's brilliant mind, to appear simple and fluid like water.

Not to say that he had assimilated the entire knowledge pool of the world, but perhaps it would be more apt to say that he grasped and mastered whatever branch of knowledge attracted his attention, and its expression became simple and comprehensible for those receiving the information through him. The brilliance of his personality attracted all, regardless of class or caste, religion or intellect. While a rustic fellow did not fear to approach him, the most scholarly person greeted him yet respectfully. Acharya's intellect did not arouse jealousy-born egotism in the scholar nor did it cause the illiterate to be ashamed of ignorance.

While conversing with scholars, Acharya's every sentence would convey casually the impression that this is not all. Should one seek further, a treasure-trove of knowledge is available but the first condition of this exchange was a compassionate not egotistical approach.

In this context, an interesting incident comes to mind. At the old residence of M.L.A's than called the 'councillor's old

residence,' one night, Mahavir Tyagi quite dramatically entered Venkatesh Narayan Tiwari's room, huffing and panting. Startled, Tiwari enquired, "wherefrom are you coming over running so? What happened? "Tyagi replied, "Pandit, I was in real trouble back there. I was caught between a rock and a hard place, with no scope for escape. With difficulty only did I find a getaway route." Tiwari asked, "Do provide an explanation, no use posing riddles, what is the matter? Thereupon Tyagi admitted sheepishly, "it was my mistake that in the evening I ventured into the room where Sampoornanand and Narendra Dev were discussing socialism. I thought that in the company of these two stalwarts, I may learn something about the subject. Initially, I could understand some portion of the debate but soon their pre-stored knowledge, with the support of arguments in complex, technical jargon, grew incomprehensible. They were aiming at each other from the mountain of arguments, complex, technical terms like heavy stones. Neither of the warriors was ready to give the other, an opportunity to stop. It would have been a show of disrespect, to quit then, from the company of these knowledgeable leaders. The growing complexities in their intense debate, dismayed me. My situation was of the grain that seeks escape from between two heavy parts of the grinding equipment." Tiwari laughed out loudly, humourously asking Tyagi, "Who asked you to go there?"

It was a distinctive trait of Narendra Dev's personality that even a layman would not suffer inferiority complex before him. Acharya would treat him, as a dear relative. Whatever be the topic of discussion, one would not feel small. Acharya intense sensitivity often brought him suffering but it did not bother him overmuch.

Shriprakash has also mentioned an incident that he recounted often. It happened when Narendra Dev was residing at M.L.A's old residence, as a member of the U.P. Legislative Assembly. Shriprakash was visiting Lucknow for some Congress-related

work and would often stay with him there. Since only one-room accommodation was then available for the M.L.A's, therefore Shriprakash would sleep in the verandah. Early one morning, between five and six' O clock he went inside the room to find Acharya leaning against a pillow, breathing labourously. It was clear that he had suffered another attack of asthma.

Shriprakash was extremely surprised when he found that even at that time of the morning, with Acharya in such a condition, a person was yet sitting by his bed, trying to secure his support for some vested interest. He desired Acharya's intervention on his behalf, to get which he was unable to get for himself. Although Shriprakash never disclosed that individual's name nor the purpose of the visit, yet it seems to be about election ticket. Whatever the matter, Shriprakash was quite unhappy about it and hinted to the man about it not being an appropriate time. However, the man, lost in self-praise, kept repeating the request to Narendra Dev. Though breathing only with difficulty, Acharya was still reassuring him to help to the extent possible. Despite this, the men refused to budge. Unable to bear the inhumane conduct, Shriprakash ordered the man out of the room. After he had departed, Narendra Dev politely asked Shriprakash why had he done so!

In his memory, Sampoornanand has written that "Acharya would be lying on the hospital bed, friends would take him away forcefully, to a resting place but people approached him there also and sought his opinion on political issues, talk for hours and have him write long essays. Despite suffering various medical problems, Narendra Dev humility, gentlemanliness, and the sentiment of public welfare, would not let him say 'no.' Consequently, he grew weak and suffered asthma attacks. He would suffer for days, yet people would not just let him be."

Gandhi had spoken of Narendra Dev, "he was the gift of the ancient culture of India and the education of contemporary age."

This one sentence aptly describes Narendra Dev personality, which was such a blend of the Indian values and the intellect of modern times. While assimilating western ideas, Narendra Dev yet stood firm on Indian ground reality. Despite repetition, it would perhaps still not be irrelevant to say that he was a free thinking man who gave a completely new form to and redefined the ideas that he adopted, whether western or Indian.

The luminosity of Acharya's personality came from a combination of his bright intellect and sacrificing nature. Since childhood, he developed a multifaceted personality. The indelible impressions of the *Bhagvad Gita* that he had memorised in childhood, marked him forever. If as a child, he had impressed Mahamana Madanmohan Malviya, with his clear Sanskrit pronunciation, while the public was much influenced by his heart's determination to rid the society of violence, exploitation and discrimination.

While Narendra Dev's father contributed greatly to his personality and character building, Acharya has also acknowledged certain others. There is clear mention of Swami Ramtirth, Mahatma Gandhi, Tilak, Lala Hardayal and some teachers. It also seems necessary to mention that the philosophies of Lord Buddha and Tolstoy shaped his personality. The power of self-control, a free spirit, the feeling of detachment in life and the volition for unselfish actions came from Acharya's study of *Gita*, his deliberations on the philosophy-character of certain great men. As the oil becomes fragrant by the essence of flowers, so too did Narendra Dev's personality blossom with the essence of his qualities. The fragrance of his virtues permeated his conduct and thoughts.

The extent of Rabindranath's influence on Acharya is not known but he had the enthusiasm to walk alone on the path that he set himself. A clear example of this was his pledge, taken amidst the workers of the Praja Socialist Party at Kashi, on 30th April 1955, he was determined, "I cannot be a mute witness to

the takeover of the entire party, by a small group. People think, he is old, infirm, cannot walk much, what can he do? This is a good opportunity. I will tour the whole country, to take the holy message of socialism to each and every hut on the Indian soil. My asthma attacks and the political tour will go along together. Those revolting against the party cannot be forgiven,” Acharya’s fortitude shines through in these words.

Narendra Dev had irrepressible, will power, the strength of his convictions and the courage to die for his ideals. His entire life was spent fighting injustice and oppression. Narendra Dev’s loyalty to socialism came from his firm belief in human values and humanity. He wanted to propagate the concept and significance of labour in the society. On his return from Thailand, talking to this author, in a certain context, Narendra Dev had commented that, “socialism cannot be established” until the cost of products is more and the price of a human life less.

Usually, after a certain age, man’s growth stops and mental processes suffer, but Acharya’s personality remained untouched by this inertia. Till the last days of his life, assimilating new streams of ideologies, Narendra Dev worried about how to impart them to his countrymen in the form that he desired to.

As representatives of their era, other great men have also reflected the aspirations of their generation, but Narendra Dev while continuously associated with the contemporary society, yet glimpsed the future. This is the reason why he could clearly express the hopes and the aspirations of the next generation as well. Therefore, it would not be an exaggeration to call him a giant of his age and a man of immortal distinction.

Acharya Narendra Dev was the very image of humility and unpretentiousness. The way he conquered his own ego was a matter of envy for his contemporary thinkers. Due to this quality, he could belong to the entire society yet his intellect did not distance him from a layman. He recognised the importance of

society and made attempts for its progress. The more well-educated the people, the more advanced will a society be.

According to Narendra Dev, until the intellectual and moral standard of man is high, true socialism cannot be established. As Acharya puts it, “a socialist does not live only for himself and his family, he lives for the entire society. His heart is generous and liberal and he keeps an account of human misery in the same way as the Richter-scale, of the smallest tremor.”

Narendra Dev aspired to make the moral force, an essential quality of man. According to him, moral force protects from even the biggest fear. It is the moral force that may keep the ruling class, once in power, away from the misuse of state-authority. Acharya believed that socialism cannot be established by the people competing for power and rights. Such opportunities appear before any society when a part of the society rises above selfish considerations. At the time, its desire to sacrifice life for an ideal or objective, becomes stronger. These are the brilliant phases in the history of society.

To view Narendra Dev’s concept of a socialist society, in his own words, “at that time, the atmosphere of the society is charged with fresh enthusiasm, new ideas and new imagination. Each individual then gets the chance to surpass himself. Society finds a higher standard and heralders of a new age comes forth. The youths are particularly influenced by the new dreams and aspirations. New concepts are discussed everywhere. The curiosity peaks and the thirst for knowledge increases. Each era provides its literature. Just like the waves, influenced by the tides of the ocean, rise so high as if impatient to touch the very moon, so also, in the revolutionary era, the sentiments of human heart aspire to transcend their restrictive limits, to permeate the entire society, free like the unbounded ocean.” In these poetic words did Narendra Dev explain the nature of the culture in socialism.

Narendra Dev was unhappy, "in modern age, power-worship has increased and because of the greed for privileges and rights, there is found, amongst the ruling class, envy, animosity and conflicts. As a result of this, the social and spiritual value of life have also been destroyed." This quotation makes clear, the idealism and spiritualism that marked Acharya's life and prevailed till end.

Acharya's health deteriorated later but this did not negatively effect his discharge of duties. His conduct, his behaviour, his faith in the society, the sentiment of serving the masses, all these remained unblemished. Often people also took undue advantage of his benevolent personality. Some examples have been given before, yet Narendra Dev remained true to the public welfare objectives. This often diverted attention away from his rapidly deteriorating health.

Acharya was generous and patience did not let him become bitter to the point of excess. Due to this factor, he could never pay much attention to his family responsibilities and kept spending a major portion of his income on assisting students and in social service. This meant that Narendra Dev had to face financial problems. It is said that during one such economic crisis, Acharya had to sell series of beautiful Mughal-period paintings of *raga-ragini*s, which he had inherited. In the series, there were a total of hundred paintings, depicting various raginis and their description in the form of a couplet beneath each. There was silver work on the paintings and it looked as fresh as new. The famous art-connoisseur of Lanka, Kumaraswamy was ready to give twenty-five thousand rupees for this series. However, Acharya did not deem it appropriate to send this national heritage out of India therefore, he sold it to Allahabad University for twenty-five hundred rupees only.

Even with a disease-ravaged body, Narendra Dev retained his interest in food until the last. Since his youth, Acharya

preferred sweets and spicy food. In particular he liked *rabari*, *malai-kulfi*, *curd-chaat* and *coffee*. Even during an asthma-attack, if he came to know that good milk-cream had been purchased, he would ask for it. While at Faizabad, he was quite fond of *rabari* by a shopkeeper named Gariban. While a student at Kashi Vidyapeeth, Acharya had become fond of Pandeypur Pisenharia's *gulabjamun*.

While visiting the different cities of India, Narendra Dev would seek information of famous local sweets. The hosts also, out of respect for him, would present assorted delicacies. This adversely affected Acharya's digestion, yet he could not overcome his cravings despite repeated admonitions by the respectable Dr. Bhagwandas. Observing his inclination for food, Narendra Dev's friends at Kashi Vidyapeeth had termed his manner of consuming food as 'Punjab Mail.'

Narendra Dev had a rich and distinctive personality. His friends and colleagues have also written much about him. According to Prof. Rajaram Shastri, "humanitarianism and civilised conduct marked Acharya's personality. His personality was a unique combination of knowledge and action, studies and practice, old and new beliefs, ancient and western ideals and good conduct."

As the famous communist leader, Hiren Mukherjee put it, because of his unique personality, Acharya was among those legends in the world with whom folklores are associated. He had the will power to face the realities of life, without becoming cynical. There was no place in his heart, for ill will. He was quite incapable of baser thoughts. As Nehru puts it, "will power, intellect and honesty like his is rare."

One of Acharya's students, Balkrishna Vishwanath Kasekar, wrote about him, "there is a combination of wisdom, character and selflessness in his personality, the likes of which is hard to find elsewhere." Actually, Acharya Narendra

Dev was the very image of humility and grace. In politics, the one thing in his personality that damaged his cause, was the lack of instinctual self-propagation. Selfishness never swayed him. Acharya's class fellow, Pandit Govindballabh Pant discovered in him, an incomparable combination of tolerance and greatness.

Possessed of a splendid personality, in his personal life, Narendra Dev always kept away from the worldly luxuries. He lived, straddling two eras. One that he had inherited and the other that he was helping build, to leave behind as legacy in national interest. Acharya had dreamt of the future era, in the form of democratic socialism which none other could expound as clearly.

Remarking on Acharya's unique personality, Sampoornanand states 'even after quitting Congress, Narendra Dev remained a popular, eminent leader. No matter which group or party he belonged to, there was none, with an interest in politics, who did not respect and admire him... suffice it to say about Acharya's character that there may perhaps be someone bitterly opposed to him but none could ever find an opportunity to mar his character. Those who had the good fortune to meet him, live with him must have observed how well-mannered he was with acquaintances. As a result, no matter how acutely opposed politically one was to him, none was his enemy. He transcended all forms of enmity."

Narendra Dev's friend, Faridul-Haque Ansari, describing his personality, wrote, 'Acharya Narendra Dev was not only a well-educated philosopher and thinker but also an exalted human being. He was a fine man of Eastern culture and civilisation who was yet detached. Every incident in his life presents an example worth emulating, by 'The Asians in general and the Indians, in particular... He was a towering personality of his era."

In Narendra Dev's personality resonated that distress of the common man, the solution of which, he always sought. This is why, Acharya desired to create a new society in India, without oppressor or oppressed, with fruits of labour to all, none illiterate and no deaths from lack of medicine and treatment.

Benevolent and Gracious Life

Though affection and grace are not naturally contradictory qualities, its balance made a happy combination in Acharya Narendra Dev. The day that Gandhi gave the slogan of 'Quit India' and 'Do or Die,' he along with other top leaders was arrested. Acharya was also put under house arrest in Ahmadnagar Fort. Acharya's personality, his physique-stature and his scholarly-demeanour influenced people much. Narendra Dev was a man with ascetic leanings, not engrossed in worldly pursuits. This was unparalleled in political and social life.

While at Ahmadnagar Fort, Narendra Dev's correspondence with his elder son highlights and unfolds certain aspects of his nature and his interests. Acharya's personality traits are assimilated in the completeness of his personality, but it seemed suitable to discuss them in a separate chapter since these are connected to his personal life and with relevant details provide interesting information. Besides highlighting the personality traits of Narendra Dev, it also lets one glimpse the atmosphere at Ahmadnagar Fort.

In a letter, Acharya demands from his son, some good Hindi novels as his fellow prisoners were learning Hindi there. Obviously, they were from non-Hindi speaking regions or those whose initial education was in English medium. At the time, the feeling of opposing Hindi was not as strong. It was generally believed that for the unity of the nation, mass communication at the national level and successfully managing the struggle for freedom of India, no language other than Hindi would be as sustaining. Today, when mediocre leaders and less emancipated people oppose Hindi in favour of English language, it does appear

as if despite political freedom, at the mental level we are still the slaves of Britishers.

Narendra Dev's letters disclose how the top leaders were devotedly learning Hindi. With due respect in their hearts, for the language, they desired to make it a worthy means of communication with correct application. Narendra Dev himself possessed good knowledge of Sanskrit, Hindi, English, French, Pali languages. Besides his command over the French Language, there is also ample proof of his deep awareness of and respect for other languages.

In a letter, Acharya wrote to his elder son for sending a good Hindi dictionary, if possible, the one published by Gyan Mandal. Had he asked for English-Hindi, Sanskrit-Hindi or French-Hindi it would have made sense, that while translating from these languages, one could be in doubt. However, for one with such command over Hindi and Sanskrit, the need for a Hindi dictionary arouses curiosity, particularly when Acharya was working in Hindi only, at the time. Probably, not for meaning but only in usage, would he need to consult a dictionary. At the time, no good Hindi dictionary had been etymologically developed, so whether a Gyan Mandal one or another, it would hardly have served the purpose.

It is quite probable that Narendra Dev would have wanted to use the words with the correct nuance, thus increasing the communicative power of the language. It is clear that the writers and scholars of that generation were quite alert and aware in the use of language. The thought did not cross in Acharya's mind that with Hindi as mother-tongue, whatever he wrote or spoke in Hindi Language, would be considered correct. He was untouched by such egotism, an enviable and worth-emulating quality. Such conduct of great men shows their dignity.

Acharya's letters from Ahmadnagar provide glimpses of a father's affection for his son as well as concern for other dear

ones. Narendra Dev informs his family that “for the past one and a half month, I have not suffered asthma attack as is usual for summer.” That is it. Then he is concerned only for others, “you take care of your health. This is of primary importance. Participate in sports and entertainment activities. Always be cheerful. Do not let any conflict plague your mind. There is no reason to worry about me.”

Narendra Dev’s family knew of his propensity for self-study. They also knew that he suffered from asthma. This is why Acharya in his next letter seeks to reassure them that “because of the sweltering heat, I am not attempting to read much, these days.” He tried to convey that though he cannot give up reading altogether, but he is not indulging in serious focused studies that may affect his health. In the same letter, Narendra Dev also gives a clue of what is going on, in his mind. As he writes, “...These days, I am planning to write a Hindi book on the Buddhist philosophy. At present I am busy in collecting the related information but not enough material to write a good book on this subject, is available at the fort here. Several reference books are needed for the purpose which is only possible when the support of quite a good library in ancient studies is available. Still, I think that I might as well write the book first. The shortcoming if any, may be tackled later, once the facilities are available.” This letter reveals that Acharya was serious about writing a book on the Buddhist philosophy, having pondered the issue for sometime. He ends the letter with blessings for the servant, Satyadev.

Meanwhile, it appears that work was underway on the draft of this book on the Buddhist religion-philosophy. In it was given both, the influence and opposition to the philosophy available in the Buddhist omnibus, about the origin and development of the world, in the opinions of the Buddhist philosophers. Several issues of knowledge-science were moulding ideas anew. Maybe, in his book, Acharya wanted to stabilize his opinion on the matter, after due deliberations.

In his letter dated 14 October, 1943 letter to his son, Narendra Dev asks, "can you please ask Dr. Awadhesh Narayan Singh, who is Reader in the Department of Mathematics at Lucknow University, to provide answers to the following questions, (I) what is the correct time of Hindi astrology method and Aryabhatt Brahmagupta and Bhaskaracharya? (II) When was the first reference to zero in mathematics, given in Indian context? (III) Who is the author of Leelawati (an important Maths book) and why was it named thus? (IV) It has been the traditional belief that Leelawati was the name of Bhaskaracharya's daughter and the book was named after her. Confirm or deny if this was indeed the case. (V) Was there library support or precedent to facilitate this kind of unusual titles? Acharya further adds that "you can also tell him that he can send some books related to Hindi Mathematics directly to me so that these questions or related general queries may be clarified."

It is clear that while writing about the Buddhist philosophy, Narendra Dev wanted to keep before himself that whole and comprehensive overview of Indian intellectual progress without which any ideology would have been incomplete. His letters also exhibit his awareness of his duties and the standard of the readers to whom he wanted to make available, detailed, descriptive and correct knowledge. His sincerity and grace is an example for others.

Acharya's demand for the required books is incessant but his letters also convey constantly, his affection for his kith and kin, friends and acquaintances. His elder son is the medium for such expressions of Acharya's feelings since under the prison discipline and related rules, he could write only to those relatives who had been cleared in the government list. It was convenient to keep in touch with others through his elder son Narendra Dev mentions this and is pained at his helplessness in the matter.

It seems that by 19 June, 1944, Acharya had begun the translation of '*Abhidharna Kosha*.' In the letter, he asks for its original French book, writing, "I want to finish its translation in the next four months. If I receive the original French book, I can translate it directly into Hindi, speedily and easily." He also reminds of another book that he had asked for, in his previous letter mentioning, "I had asked for the first volume of '*Kavita Kaumudi*' which I have yet to receive." *Kavita Kaumudi* was a popular book during the second and third decades of the twentieth-century. It was published in four volumes. The first three were collections of selected Hindi poems of date and the fourth, of Urdu poems. Late Ramnaresh Tripathi had collected, selected and edited them. Due to him, lakhs of readers could appreciate poems in Hindi and Urdu languages.

From his letters two things become clear. On one hand, Acharya was seriously studying and creating philosophical literature. On the other hand, besides entertainment volume, he was also endevouring to arouse, among the non-Hindi speaking or those leaders under house-arrest, who did not know Hindi, love, respect and loyalty towards Hindi language. Today, the language is no longer being decorated, adorned or creating its space in the hearts of the people. Though exceptions are there, nowadays, though people are writing and speaking, using the language but few care for linguistic skills. Even fewer care about how synthetic and artificial is the language that flows from the pens of Hindi professors and those in the government offices. Narendra Dev however, always remained loyal and alert to the use of Hindi language.

As mentioned before, Acharya's letters provide glimpses of his affection and concern for others. It seems that at the Ahmadnagar Fort, he had come across a Hindi book titled '*Hamara Hindustan*.' He liked it probably as it presented a true picture of India. Acharya sent it to his son, requesting him to read it. Had he so desired, he could have written just the name

and address of the publisher, asking his son to send for it, yet he did not do this as he wanted that his children, in particular, his elder son, read the books that he deemed fit for children of his age.

In one of his previous letters, Narendra Dev requests his elder son to read the novels by Alexander Dumas, Lin U Teng and Pearl S. Buck, recommending their availability at Shriprakash's place, otherwise he would arrange for it. Acharya's recommendation to read such books may have had something to do with his attentiveness to good grasp and knowledge of the English language. Perhaps, through his son, he wanted to reach out to his generation, presenting before them, the image of post-independence India.

Requesting his son to read also the book, 'China Builds for Democracy' and the series of articles published in newspapers by Purushottamdas and his associates, titled 'Plan of Economic Development for India,' which is the outline of the same. Acharya is so keen for his son to read it that he writes, "you must have read this series in the newspapers. If not, then try to read it. If it is not available to you, write so to me. I will send it from here." Maybe Narendra Dev was spreading the message among the young generation, to accept democracy and make endeavours for the economic development of India from inside the walls of the Ahmadnagar Fort. This message for the youth was an indication that now, India shall soon be free. This could be pure conjecture but it is corroborated and the titles of the books suggested for reading including Pearl S. Buck's 'Asia and Democracy' and the Stalin award winner 'The Fall of Paris' and 'Rainbow' etc.

The *diwali* of 1943 was near, but what could Narendra Dev's family have celebrated. He conveyed his good wishes and blessings to all his near and dear ones also asking after Shivprasad. In every letter, Acharya desires news of someone or the other. With letters as the sole means of communication

allowed him, Acharya wants to access all, helpless as he is, to approach them directly. The people mentioned most, in his letters include his servant, Satyadev, Yash, the son of Shriprakash, Laxmi (suffering from tuberculosis then), Kaka babu, his elder brother and other siblings plus spouses of Shivprakash Gopal, own wife, Manager, Babu Harkishan Lal, Vishnu and Baijnath. The affection with which, forest-bound Rama asks after several people, when he meets Sumant, seems applicable in Acharya's case too. He frequently enquires as to whether Laxmi has reached Bhawali Sanatorium or not. Acharya gives the address of a doctor friend and is solicitous about the health of Shivprasad and his own elder brother.

The end of year 1943 was approaching fast. It can be deduced from the letters written in the month of October that the translation of *Abhidharma Kosha* too was fast underway. To complete his work Acharya needed the third and fourth volumes of the original work in French language. He had demanded but not received the books ordered from Banaras, so he moved on to translating the fifth volume. Shriprakash seems to have been the source of books for Acharya.

On 30 October 1943, Acharya wrote to his son, "I hope that you have conveyed my message to Shriprakash that he should soon send the third and fourth volumes of the original book in French language, if not available send the first and second volumes. Tell him to also send Yashomitra's Sanskrit commentary."

In his letter of 20 November, 1943, Acharya express heartfelt satisfaction at having received from Shriprakash the first four volumes of *Abhidharma Kosha* in French language and through Dr. Awadhesh Narayan, material on Hindu Mathematics. He directs his son, 'convey my sincere thanks to these two, expressing my gratitude. Also inform them that I will return these books within a month.

Acharya further adds, kindly write to Vishwanath (Sh. Vishwanath Sharma of Kashi Vidyapeeth) that I will not be able to utilise the material until the first volume of Yashomitra's Sanskrit documentary on *Abhidharma Kosha* is also received. I do have the second volume of his commentary in which there is a description of volumes four to nine of the original *Abhidharma Kosha*, in French language. With its assistance, I will complete the translation of the fourth volume that is with me. I have completed the seventh, eighth and ninth chapters but can complete the fifth and sixth only when its original in French is available."

Acharya reiterates that it will not take him more than one month to translate the fourth volume from this, it appears that the books were being made available from libraries with return time restrictions. Acharya writes, "...therefore, tell him that either they should send the first volume of Yashomitra's commentary or the fifth and sixth chapters of *Abhidharma Kosha* in French." His anxiety is palpable, when he advises, "it is much better that they send all together if it is possible." There is also indications in the letter that Narendra Dev had become convinced of India gaining freedom soon and was deliberating on the constitution for an independent India. He writes to "send Shivarao edited Modern constitutions and other related aut hentic documents, that highlight the working of federal administrative systems. I do believe that Shivarao's book is available in Banaras Hindu University." What an irony then that when the Constituent Assembly was finally formed, due to political pressures or other reasons, despite requests from his friends, Narendra Dev could not join it. Such self-study, serious writings, deliberations and sober thinking is rarely witnessed. When Acharya was under house arrest, some of his friends must also have been there at the place, viz Jawaharlal, Sardar Patel, Kriplani etc. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and some others must also have been there, meeting at convenience. However, Acharya's letter mention

nothing of this, possibly due to restrictions on such information. All the letters to and from Acharya Narendra Dev were channeled through the Political Department of Bombay Administration. However, this much is clear that all leaders present at the Ahmadnagar Fort shared common ground of self-study and worries about the future of the country.

Narendra Dev had his goal clear and was determined to complete the book on Buddhist religion-philosophy before his release from the Ahmadnagar Fort. He was speedily going through the books that he had received. Even a student sitting for exams would not be so diligent as Acharya was. He had sent for Dr. Thomas's book 'Life of Buddha.' In his letter of 20 November 1943, Acharya admits his satisfaction and writes, "I am glad that you got the book of Dr. Thomas." However, Acharya could receive the book only by 21 December 1943, when he wrote to his son acknowledging its receipt, "received your affectionate letter and Dr. Thomas 'Life of Buddha' I will return it by the next week." It appears that by that time, Acharya was half-way through the translation of the fourth volume of *Abhidharma Kosha* and was hopeful of completing the remaining half in the next fortnight.

On not receiving the desired books, Acharya worried as much or more than he did on not getting news of his dear ones. A letter of 31 December 1943, informs of this mental state when he writes, "I hope that you have received my letter. No book has arrived from Banaras, may be Shivprakash is not there at present or perhaps he has not received your letter yet. Since the library will be closed on Christmas and Moharram, I am afraid that there will be a delay in getting the books that I require."

Meanwhile, Narendra Dev received a letter from Dr. Bhagwandas, along with a new year gift of his new book, 'Purushartha.' Much pleased at this, Acharya immediately wrote to his son, in February 1944, "convey my hearty greetings to him (Dr. Bhagwandas). I am grateful for his

affectionate remembrance, I read the pleasant news of the function on his seventy-fifth birthday, in the newspaper, 'Leader' and was happy about it. I did not remember his birthday in time so could not greet him then. He is from the tradition of Indian sages. We pray that God keep him healthy for long, for us, so that he may lead the world towards light and may redefine in today's language, our ancient concepts and institutions that have survived several ages." Acharya mentions in this letter that he would soon return the books from Kashi Vidyapeeth. He also seeks to inform Prof. Kaushmbi that he is also writing a Hindi book on *Pali Abhidharma* and had also translated from Pali to Hindi language, some important chapters of '*Visudhimaggo*' as well. He requests too that the English translation of Dr. Beniprasad's 'Jehangir' Yadunath Sarkar's 'Aurangzeb' and 'Babarnama.

Before moving on to the next letter, it is pertinent to wonder as to why did Narendra Dev term Dr. Bhagwandas as being from the tradition of Indian sages. The reason for this belief is found in Acharya's opinions on philosophy, religion, literature, culture and socialism. He did not want India or Indian society to be regressive yet the India, of his imagination and its society could not be envisaged as cut-off from its ancient culture. Acharya not only frequently emphasised remembrance of the best aspects of the Indian culture but also pleaded fervently for its acceptance. In doing so, he laid emphasis on self-evaluation, discretion and the ability to recognise and mould oneself according to the need of the hour.

The traditional arrangement of ashrams under rishis in the prevalent culture, earned appreciation since it ensured the freedom of expression and unhindered studies. The sages did not expect royal patronage nor did state power harass them. Freedom from the temptations of riches made for truth as foundation and the revolution could find its base. A sage is a visionary, society the nation and those desiring progress will

always need such people as can rise above the ordinary plane to provide right form to them.

What Narendra Dev said of Dr. Bhagwandas is true of him today though now-a-days even ordinary men are being politically termed as '*rishis*.' Even a political leader can be a sage provided he possesses the clear outline of a comprehensive view and separate himself from the seat of state power.

Narendra Dev's love of Hindi and his respect for language has been mentioned earlier too. While at Ahmadnagar Fort, under house arrest he wanted to remain associated with Hindi and its changing form by studying it and through creative writings. In his letter dated 26 February, 1944 to his son, Acharya requests Shriprakash to send some magazines. He demands, the weekly edition of *Sansar* or *Aaj*, whichever is sanctioned by the government. Suspecting that being directly related to the struggle for India's independence, these newspapers may not have had their weekly editions published, Acharya requests, "I would also like to send for *Saraswati*. Since this is a purely literary magazine, maybe, there will not be any objection to it. Enquire about this and arrange to send the available editions of this magazine. Today, except to check out their own interviews or news items, hardly any leader likes to be even seen reading Hindi newspapers or magazines.

Acharya enquires of his son, as to whether he has read the outline of industrial development of India, published in newspapers, with the signature of such men as Purushottamdas. He advises his son to write an essay on it if he so desires. Acharya is keen to exhort his children and their generation to take interest in and understand the plans for the future prosperity of India.

Acharya raises the issue again, in another letter, emphasising on the need to read the article also since related questions may be posed in the impending exams. He believed that despite their subjugation to the British Government, the intellectual figures at

the universities had retained their courage and discretionary freedom, enough to discuss and ask as questions in examinations, matters of national interest. This is an example of an intellectual philosopher's faith in and sincerity towards freedom of expression. Acharya maintained this dignity all his life.

Acharya's last letter from Ahmadnagar Fort, while under house arrest, is dated 27 May 1944. Then he was sent to Bareilly jail from where he wrote a letter on 10 May 1945. It appears that he had almost completed the translation of *Abhidharma Kosha* by the time that he reached Bareilly. There too, he continued studying mainly the Buddhist philosophy. He read the History of *Abhidharma*, written in the French language by Poussent, as well as the books related to Indian philosophy written by Renee Gradse. Acharya also studied the Sanskrit and Pali scriptures. He had almost finished with 'Modern Constitutions', and some other Hindi books on Constitutions.

Before departing from Ahmadnagar fort to Bareilly jail, Acharya wrote a letter on 7 February 1944 that provides glimpses of his life there, marked by non-attachment and indifference to material prosperity. Regarding the dividend which he received from the government liquidator, Acharya had possibly received three instalments but was under house arrest at the time of the fourth one. He desired his son to receive the amount. Therefore, he wrote to his son, "I see that you are facing problems in getting the fourth instalment of the dividend. I want that it should be paid to you. I am bestowing on you, the authority to receive this payment, you know that I can write to certain persons only. I cannot even write formal business letters, therefore, it is not possible for me to directly write to the liquidator, asking him to make the payment to you. I hope that when you show him this letter, then he will release the payment to you. The other option which you have suggested is neither practical nor possible. However, if even showing this letter to the liquidator does not solve the issue then I will sign the cheque that

you send, in your favour and return it to you. Still, problems may arise of the name of the bearer, for the cheque to be submitted in his account since I do not have bank account.”

This letter pains then amazes that till 7 February 1944, this great person, Acharya Narendra Dev did not have a single bank account. People opine the Acharya believed in Marxism, ‘Marxist analysis and ideology gives importance to materialism. In managing and controlling prosperity and industry, modern mechanism are needed and used. Acharya would never have opposed the banking system, instead, he must have believed in the need for it.

Acharya also emphasised on the propagation and application of modernization and science yet so far as his own personal life was concerned, he remained detached. Those who find it hard to believe that he was so, can at the most, only brand him as careless about himself but this too, is not without its reasons. It was the natural outcome of a life completely dedicated to the society and one’s nation. However, later facts also confirm Acharya’s non-attachment to worldliness.

In his letter of 19 February 1944, Acharya wrote, “I am returning the papers of the fourth instalment of the dividend, with my own and the witness signatures. I do not know what procedure you will have to adopt. Please consult Shriprakash and do as he directs you to. You can keep this money and utilise it to buy books for yourself. That is, as you deem proper. Last year, I had suggested to you, the names of certain books that you tried to obtain but were not successful in doing so. Nowadays, it is difficult to get good books (this difficulty was posed by the war). I am suggesting the names of some more books.”

What further evidence is needed to prove Acharya’s non-attachment to materialism, his discretion, grace, affection and his

concerns. He expresses his wish that the divided amount be used in purchasing books but in the same breath, allows his son, the freedom to do as he finds suitable.

In all his letters, Acharya's concern for brother, sister-in-law, children, relatives and friends is definitely according to his values as well as the social norms and behaviour, yet there is an innate dignity and grace to it all, all his own.

Appendix I

Narendra Dev in his own eyes

I was born in Sitapur, during *Kartik* month, on the eighth day of the moon-lit fortnight of *Samvat* 1946. Our ancestral property is in Faizabad though (at the time), my father, Baldev Prasad used to practice law at Sitapur. British Rule was established in Oudh in 1856. The first person in our clan, to receive English education, was the younger brother of my paternal grandfather. He became a teacher at the old Canning College. He provided English education to my father and his elder brother.

After F.A. from Canning College, my father could not clear his B.A. exams due to eye-problem. Then, my paternal grandfather read out law books to him and thus he passed law exams at Sitapur, with my paternal grandfather's apprentice, Muralidhar. Both lived like real brothers, earning and spending money together. Munshi Muralidhar was childless and considered his nephew as his son. Two years after my birth, my paternal grandfather died and my father quit Sitapur to practise law at Faizabad.

When at Sitapur, my father became religiously inclined, under the influence of ascetics. He was a generous man but practised a simple lifestyle. He took keen interest in Vedanta and gained profound knowledge of the same. He sought the company of ascetics. Although his medium of education was Persian, he learnt Sanskrit language too, to gain knowledge of his own Indian culture and religion. Though a renowned lawyer, he was interested in other subjects as well. He had written books for children, in English, Hindi and Persian languages. Beside this, he also published other books and wrote the English primer to teach my elder brother. He was quite interested in gardening and

building houses. We had a small library that I would look after, during the summer holidays.

As I mentioned above my father was religiously inclined and *sanatana-dharma* preachers, ascetics and scholars would throng our house. However, my father also took interest in the activities of Congress and social conference. Pandit Kalidin Awasthi was my first teacher, who taught us siblings, Hindi, Maths and Geography. Father loved me much and would daily himself teach me for half-an-hour. I would often accompany him to the court.

I remember that my father took me along to Delhi once. A session of *Bharat Dharma Mahamandal* was held there. On that occasion, I heard a speech by Pandit Deendayal Sharma. At the time, I was not capable of evaluating its value. I just remember that Sharma was quite famous at the time. At home, I read Tulsi's *Ramcharit Manas* and the entire Hindi *Mahabharata*. I also read *Betal Pachisi*, *Sinhasana Battisi*, *Soorsagar* etc. books. At the time, *Chandrakanta* was quite popular. I must have read this novel sixteen times. I also once read *Chandrakanta Santati*, that is in twenty-four volumes. It was said that many people learnt Hindi just to read this book. Probably these were the books read in those days.

At ten years of age, my sacred-thread ceremony was performed. In the evening, I would daily recite the chants and *Bhagvad Gita*. A Marathi Brahmin taught me Veda-recital. At one time, I had memorized *Rudri* and entire *Gita*. I had also read *Amar-Kosha* and *Laghu-Kaumudi*.

When I was ten-years old, i.e. in 1899, a Congress session was held at Lucknow. I accompanied my father who was a delegate. I got the tailor to stitch for me, a delegate's badge, a cloth-flower. Putting it on proudly, I sat with my paternal cousin in 'visitors gallery'. In those days, most of the speeches were in English and even if they had been in Hindi, I still would not have

understood much. Under such circumstances, what else could I do, save make a din. The disturbed audience scolded me and I escaped.

At the time, what did I understand the importance of Congress but this much, I came to know, that Lokmanya Tilak, Rameshchandra Dutt and Justice Ranade were India's foremost leaders. I saw them there, for the first time. Ranade died in 1901 but I got to see Mr. Dutt again during 1906 Calcutta session of the Congress.

I was admitted to school in 1902. In 1904 or 1905, I learnt Bangla language and my teacher read to me *Kritivas Ramayana*. My father influenced my life deeply. He taught me to behave well with the servants too and I did. The bad habit of smoking was there in the students even then. I remember once at a fair in Ayodhya, I bought a cigarette pack, to indulge myself. When I lit up and inhaled, my head spun, cardimom and betel helped me recover somewhat, and I marvelled why do people smoke cigarettes. Since that episode, I never touched cigarettes again although sometimes had to use stenonium ones, for relief from my breathing problems.

My father commanded against lying. In this connection, I remember an incident. I was quite young when a man came, asking for my mother's brother. I went inside the house to inform him. He said go, tell him that I am not home. I repeated the message verbatim. My maternal uncle was then very angry with me. In my innocence, I could not even understand if I had done anything inappropriate. Do not jump to the conclusion that I am a very honest person. However, this much is true that I seldom lie and then remain embarrassed and distressed for long. My father's lesson works as a warning.

I have mentioned before that ascetics and preachers would visit our house. Pandit Madhav Prasad Mishra was a close acquaintance of my father and stayed for months at our house.

He knew Bengali language well and had translated '*Desher Katha*' into Hindi, but the book was confiscated. He was a good Hindi writer, with nationalist sentiments. My name then was Avinashilal, my old acquaintances still address me by this name. Mishra changed names of all of us brothers. He named me Narendra Dev.

Often at our house, *sanatana dharma* discourses were held. In 1906 when I was studying for entrance, Swami Ramtirth came to Faizabad and stayed with us. At the time, he lived only on milk. In the city, he gave a speech on '*Brahmacharya*' and the other on *Vedanta*, at our house. He had a strong aura of positive vibrations. I was much impressed by his personality and later, studied his books. He was packing for a trip to the Himalayas when Mishra commented, of what use are possessions to an ascetic? That was it; Ramtirth left all his belongings behind. Later, we received his letter from the mountains, Rama is happy!

At our school, there was a good teacher by the name of Dattareya Bhikhaji Ranade, who impressed me greatly. He had a unique style of teaching. I was in eighth standard then. In English grammar, the students of our class outrivaled those of tenth standard. I came first in my class and the teachers were happy with me except for the Sanskrit teacher. He became angry and decided to fail me and my friends in the annual exams. We grew worried, at this. At the time, one class-teacher, Master Radheyraman Lal was the school Librarian. He exercised a positive influence on us. He liked his students well and we often visited his residence. It was said that he had almost become an ascetic, renouncing worldliness. He entrusted the Library keys to me and I would give out the books. I remembered that Pandit had taken from the Library, question papers of previous two-years. From this, I deduced that the questions in the entrance level papers would be asked from those only. I sat with my friends, to solve the question papers.

Our hunch proved true, the questions in the paper were from the question papers of those only. In the examination hall, Pandit asked me, so how are you doing? Agitatedly, I replied that I had never done a better paper. Though many of the questions asked in the paper were out-of-course, I secured forty-six marks out of the total fifty and none failed the exam. I have to admit that had I not been the Librarians assistant, I would surely have failed in the Sanskrit Language question-paper that year.

In 1905, I went with my father to the Banaras session of Congress. My father's influence evoked in me the love for Indian culture. Since I did not have much knowledge of it, I later opted for Sanskrit in M.A. In 1904, well-revered Mahamana Madanmohan Malviya came to Faizabad. By way of association with the Bharat Dharma Mahamandal, he came to meet my father at home. He heard me recite a few chapters of *Gita* and was quite happy with my flawless pronunciation. He invited me, when you pass the entrance exams, come to Prayag and stay at my Hindu Boarding House. That was my first meeting with Mahamana Malviya. His benign appearance and gentle manner of speaking impressed one and all.

Although I had almost decided to enroll at the Central Hindu College, I abandoned the idea due to my friends. After passing in the entrance Exams, I went for studies to Allahabad and lived at the Hindu Boarding House, with three-four classmates in a big room. This was my first opportunity to stay in a hostel.

Due to the *Bang-bhang* (Bengal partition) move, another new faction originated in Congress, with such leaders as Lokmanya Tilak, Vipin Chandra Pal etc. At the time, I had no definite political views but only a sentiment of respect, towards and faith in Congress. In 1905, I casually joined Congress. The Prince of Wales was to visit India and Gokhale had proposed in Congress, that he be welcomed in India. Tilak vehemently opposed the proposal but ultimately bowing to pressure, immediately left the venue. This note of dissent found its echo.

At Prayag, my views underwent rapid transformation. The Hindu Boarding House was a center of extreme nationalist opinions. Pandit Sundarlal was the leader of the students then. He was expelled from the university for his political views. At the Boarding house political discussions took place all the time. I also developed extreme nationalistic views.

In 1906 the Congress session was held at Calcutta with lodging arrangements at the Ripon College. There was conflict between the extreme nationalists and the Liberal groups. Had Dadabhai Nairojee not been the chairman, there would have been bi-furcation. Because of him, that was avoided. The main focus of the programme was on the use of *Swadeshi*, boycott of foreign goods and national education. There was talk of a change in the goals of Congress.

In his speech, Dadabhai Nairojee used the word, 'Swaraj' and this gave rise to a controversy between the two groups, of extreme nationalists and the liberals. Although the older leaders opposed boycott on the ground of possible spread of feelings of animosity, yet they had to accept it for the sake of Bengal.

Meanwhile, with Japan's victory began the era of public awareness in Asian nations. It gave them back their lost confidence. There naive belief in the British sense of fair play was shaken. The English educated generation believed British rule beneficial for Indians and it would make Indians adept in the administrative work. Then, entrusting the state-power to the Indians, the British would voluntarily leave India. This belief blocked all political progress. Lokmanya Tilak exposed the hollowness of this belief.

The declaration of the establishment of the new group of the extreme nationalists was made at Calcutta where two meetings were also held. One was at *Bara-bazar* which I attended. The meeting was unique for all speeches there being made in the Hindi language. Vipin Chandra Pal and Lokmanya Tilak also

spoke in Hindi. Pal did not experience much difficulty in talking in Hindi but Lokmanya did. Most north Indians lived at Bara bazar and it was for their convenience that the speeches were in Hindi language since this group had good influence in Bengal.

Leaders of both groups came to Prayag and I got the opportunity to hear their speeches. The first to arrive was Lokmanya. We went to the station to receive him. None of the city leaders went to receive and welcome him. Some students had organised a meeting for him. A gentleman had arranged a horse-carriage. We suggested that instead of the horse we hitch the wagon but Tilak did not accept. Lokmanya's words were, "preserve this enthusiasm for other good works." Tilak gave a speech in the courtyard of a lawyer whose wife had given permission, since he was out of Allahabad at the time. We put down a *durree* (rug). A student sang '*vande matram*' and the speech began in English. Lokmanya used logic and reason. There was humour too, in his speech but no place for sentimentality. Quoting the English saying that God helps those who help themselves, he asked, "so, do you think that the British are greater than even God?"

A few days later, Gokhale arrived at Allahabad and gave several speeches at the *Kayastha Pathshala*. In one speech, he said, if need be, we may stop paying tax too. Then came Vipin Chandra Pal who delivered four impressive speeches. Thus, from time to time, some leader or another from one group or the other kept visiting Prayag. Lala Lajpat Rai and Lala Hardayal also came over.

Among the leaders from the Liberal group, only Gokhale impressed us students somewhat. We pledged to use *Swadeshi* and sent for the newspapers of the extreme-nationalist group. From Calcutta, would arrive the daily, '*vande-matram*' which we read with keen interest. Its articles were quite impressive. Arvind Ghosh would often write and his articles in particular held my attention. I avidly read all his articles myself and to others.

His influence sustained even after he went to Pondicherry. I remained a subscriber of 'Arya' for years. For a long time, there was hope that he would return to Bengal and re-enter politics. Such a request was made to him in 1912, but he wrote to his brother Virendra, "Bengal wants the Arvind of 1908 but I am no longer that." I liked his articles also for his faith in our ancient culture. His ideas were honest and bright. His simple life inspired me.

At the time, Lala Hardayal had given up his scholarship abroad to return to India. He opposed the education system prevalent in the government schools and wrote fourteen articles in Punjabi language on our educational problems. Under his influence, some students in Punjab quit studies. Lala Hardayal then took on the job of teaching them. He was quite meritorious and opined that no big task can be accomplished without hard work. He underwent complete transformation after reading Edwin Arnold's "Light of Asia." He was also impressed by Shyam Krishna Verma.

Lala Hardayal had prepared two syllabi for the students. I began to read books from those lists. In 1907, Ramanand Babu's 'Modern Review' began publishing from Prayag, and was much respected at the time. We considered each Bengali youth, to be a revolutionary. This was all the more reason for an interest in Bengali literature. I read the novels by Ramesh Chandra Dutt and Bankim and delved into Bengali Literature.

We kept to the vow of using *Swadeshi*, not buying any foreign products. We also advocated *Swadeshi* use at *Magha-fair*. At the time, Cannings a strict anglo-Indian was the principal of Myor College. In our hostel, a student kept a photo of Khudiram Bose in his room. Someone informed the principal about it. One day he came directly to my friends' room and later, expelled him from the college. However, Mrs. Annie Besant admitted him to Hindu College.

Gradually, some of us came in contact with the revolutionaries, who favoured the view that Indians should get into I.C.S. so that at the time of independence, Indians should take over district administration. With this idea in mind, four of my friends left for England. I too wanted to go in 1911 but could not since my mother refused permission.

Meanwhile, in 1907, Congress split, at the Surat session, with the leaders of the extreme nationalist group separating from it. A convention was called to change the constitution of Congress. The extreme nationalist group termed this as convention Congress. Taking advantage of the split, the government sought to break-up the extreme nationalist group. Its leaders were put in jail. Several went abroad and centers of revolutionary activities cropped up at London, Paris, Geneva and Berlin from where revolutionary literature began to be published. My friends sent it over from abroad.

I also received a copy of Savarkar's 'War of Indian Independence' and I continued to get Lala Hardayal's '*vande Matram*' from Berlin '*Talwar*' and from Paris the 'Indian Sociologist.' One of my friends was imprisoned in the 1908 war while others returned to India having become barristers. After 1908, I stopped attending the Congress sessions. Since our sympathies were with the extreme nationalist group, we did not attend even the Prayag session of Congress. When both the extreme nationalist group and the liberal group merged in Congress, we rejoined Congress.

After B.A. the question of future plans rose before me. I did not want to study law but to do research in Ancient History. At Myor College too I had good teachers. Dr. Ganganath Jha was very good to me. Prof. Brown taught History in B.A. He knew Medieval Indian History well and taught it so. Because of him, I chose history. After B.A. I went to Kashi, to study Archaeology. There, I found several able teachers viz. Dr. Venice and Norman. The British teachers at Queens College

learnt Sanskrit. While teachers like Dr. Venice are rare, I also respected Mr. Norman a lot. While at Queens College, I met Shachindranath Sanyal and shared with him, the revolutionary literature from abroad. He would share information about the Indian revolutionaries. Although sympathetic to the cause of the revolutionaries I was always against dacoity. Although not a member of any revolutionary group, I was still familiar with several of their leaders. They trusted me and I helped them sometimes.

In 1913 when I passed M.A. my family wanted me to study law. I did not like this profession but not finding a place in the Archaeology Department, and with the idea to practice law while joining politics too, I did give in. I studied law.

In 1915 after completing L.L.B. I came to Faizabad to practice law. Since my views matured at Prayag and received a fresh lease of life, I had a spiritual connection with Prayag. There have always been two inclinations in my life, of studies and politics, always in conflict. If I can do both together, I am rewarded. I did get this opportunity at Kashi Vidyapeeth. This is why the time spent there was the best period of my life. I considered the people there as my family.

In 1914, after release from Mandalay jail, Lokmanya began gathering again his former associates. In this, he was assisted by Mrs. Besant and Home Rule League was established. In 1916, in our province Mrs. Besant's league was also established. I talked to Lokmanya in this regard about opening a branch of this League at Faizabad but he declined, saying that both had the same objective. The sole reason for the separate bodies was that some people did not want to be associated with an institution established by me while some others did not want to be part of the one established by Mrs. Besant.

I did open a branch of the League in Faizabad and was elected its secretary. It began publicity work and organised

meetings, from time to time. My first speech was at a meeting to oppose the house arrest of Ali brothers. I was scared of public speaking, but somehow managed the show. Some people praised my speech. Thus encouraged, gradually my inhibitions melted away. I think that had my first speech gone wrong, I probably would not have dared attempt another.

Beside the League work, I was also active in Congress and soon, without much effort on my part I found myself on all its committees. With Mahatma's entry into politics, the nature of Congress activities changed. Though not much active initially from 1919, he became more involved. He had differences over the matter with Lokmanya when he wanted to begin the non-cooperation movement on the issue of *khilafat*.

In June 1920, at the A.I.C.C. meeting in Kashi, I spoke to Lokmanya about this. He replied "in my life, I have never cooperated with the government but the question here is of the program of non-cooperation." After his release from jail, Tilak no longer reposed such faith in the public and was of the opinion that the program should be such as the public can follow. He was against the idea of boycotting the council. According to him, it was alright if even half the seats were unfilled, but if all were occupied then the loyalty to the government would harm the interests of the country in the name of representation.

Lokmanya Tilak held to another principle that one should speak one's mind in Congress but once it reached a decision, it should be accepted. I was a follower of Lokmanya Tilak, therefore, I gave a speech in Congress opposing the boycott of the council but once the decision was made, I accepted it.

My heart was not in the practice of law. At the Nagpur session of Congress, when the proposal of non-cooperation was accepted then in accordance with that I immediately quit the practice of law. The decision did not require a moment's

consideration. I did not even consult anyone before hand since I considered myself bound by the decision of the Congress. I did want to ask my father's opinion but thinking that should he oppose, I would not be able to contradict him, I did not seek his permission either. When he came to know of my decision he did not object, only advising me that I should think about my independent livelihood, though while he lived, I did not have to worry.

After the non-cooperation movement began, Jawaharlal Nehru came to Faizabad. He told me that at Banaras, a Vidyapeeth was being opened and I was wanted there. I wrote a letter to my dear friend, Shivprasad who called me over immediately. He was my class fellow and harmony in ideas led to our friendship. He was a generous man. I found him to be the only one in this world to my knowledge who did not desire fame. He also provided financial assistance to the revolutionaries. I became engrossed in the work at the Vidyapeeth. Respected Dr. Bhagwandas reposed his faith in me by making me vice president in which capacity I worked under his supervision.

For two years, I stayed at the hostel with students. It was like a family. We would indulge in the political activities together. When Ali brothers were sentenced in Karachi, all of us toured the villages in Banaras for publicity. Holding on to our luggage, we travelled daily on foot. In 1926, Dr. Bhagwandas resigned from the post of President, choosing me as his successor.

I made several new friends at Banaras. The teachers at Kashi Vidyapeeth were particularly affectionate to me. It would not be an exaggeration to say that out of this affection, they became my publicists, calling me by the title of 'Acharya' till it became a part of my name, they praised me to one and all.

Although I was introduced to Jawaharlal at the time of the Home Rule Movement, yet it was only through Shriprakash that

I came to know him and Ganesh quite well. I lived in Shriprakash house, for months. He always cared for me the way a mother does for her son. He opined about me that I do not look after myself well and am careless about my body.

Whether or not our ideas tallied, Shriprakash's affection for me never lessened. The difference of opinion did not affect our mutual affection. Separation from old friends is distressing but if courtesy sustains, the relations survive more or less unscathed. Such examples though rare, are yet there.

I do not possess leadership qualities and have no ambition either. It is a major issue, however this does not mean that I do want a disciplined life. I am not individualistic. I admire leaders from a distance, hardly venturing near. I am inhibited in this matter. Who would not be happy to be flattered to get a good post, but I have never worked for it.

I was reluctant to become the chairman of the provincial Congress committee, but yielded to the requests from my respected leaders. Similarly, when Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru asked me to joint the Executive Committee. I declined but on his request finally had to accept the invitation.

I have mentioned above I am not a leader, therefore, I cannot begin a new movement or party. In 1934, when Jaiprakash proposed to form a Socialist party and make me its chairman for the session, I declined the offer, not because I did not believe in socialism but because I did not want to shoulder such a responsibility. We were quite close and this is why ultimately I had to bow to his idea. The session took place in May 1934. When an earthquake struck Bihar, I went to work there with the students. There I met Dr. Lohia for the first time. I am happy to say that when the constitution for the Socialist Party was prepared, only I and Dr. Lohia favoured the notion that complete autonomy should be included as an objective. Ultimately, we prevailed.

I met Meher Ali once in 1928. At the time, I did not know many people in Bombay. I get apprehensive at working with strangers but it was a good thing that the leading activists soon became close as members of a family.

Although I used to give public speeches in my province as well, but I gave a speech for the first time, in All India Congress at Patna. One Maulana Mohammed Ali commented that those from Bengal and Madras were more vocal in Congress. The people from Bihar only side up to Rajendra Babu exhorting him to speak up. Those from U.P. do not themselves speak but when someone else does, run him down with the comment what nonsense he talks.

We seldom spoke before the leaders from one province. Jawaharlal Nehru seldom spoke out but I had to, in 1934, for the party: If the party had not been formed, probably I would never have mustered enough courage to speak out in Congress.

My ideology was similar to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's. Because of this and his own personality, I was always attracted to him. I have several fond memories of him. I may well mention an incident here once when we were together at the Ahmadnagar Fort, while walking we were refreshing old memories. Nehru said, "Narendra Dev! If I had not joined the Congress Movement and been to jail several times, I would not be the man that I am."

Nehru's sister, Krishna, in her book, has quoted a letter from him, which highlights his personality traits. After the death of Pandit Motilal Nehru, Jawaharlal wrote to his sisters that father's property is not mine. I am merely its trustee. This letter brought tears into my eyes. I appreciated Jawaharlal's qualities. He was quite considerate of his friends and looked well after the sick ones.

In 1942, I got the opportunity to live for four-months at the *ashram* of Mahatma Gandhi. I watched him enquire after each patient. He cared well for all of the activists. The inmates of the *ashram* would bring their problems which he would then resolve.

Lying on the sick-bed in the ashram, I would wonder why a man, who did not accept any tenet of modern Hinduism is revered by countless *sanatana* Hindus. The *Pandits* in the society may oppose him but the illiterate public worships him. We can understand this mystery when we realise that somewhere, the *shraman* culture has influenced the Indian public. The Hindu majority does not pay much heed to the conduct of a person who renounces home and hearth, to selflessly serve others. The *pandits* may criticise Gandhiji all they want, but the common man idolised him.

In October 1941, when I was released from jail, Mahatma enquired after my health and invited me to the ashram for nature treatment. I did not want to burden Mahatma so I made an excuse. However, when I went to Vardha to attend the A.I.C.C. session and fell sick there, Mahatma insisted that I stay. He was quite concerned about me and began my treatment. One night, I became quite ill, which alarmed my physician. Without informing me, at one 'O' clock at night, Mahatma was woken up and came to see me. That was his day of silence yet he broke his vow. Immediately, a motor was sent to Vardha for the doctor. By morning, I was feeling better. Stanford Cripps was in Delhi for dialogue, but Mahatma was not inclined to go. Ultimately, he yielded to requests. From Delhi, he rang up constantly, to enquire about my well-being. Ba was also sick at the time therefore, he returned quickly.

Mahatma was a man who tried to bridge the gap with those honest, but holding views different from his. Mahatma was then considering a hunger strike in jail, Mahadev bhai grew worried about this and asked me to talk to Mahatma about this matter. Dr. Lohia also arrived at Sevagram and the same request was made to him, soliciting his assistance too. Mahatma heard us out patiently but could not reach a final decision that day. On 9th August, we were arrested at Bombay and taken in a special train to Ahmadnagar, Mahatma, his entourage and several

eminent personalities of Bombay were included. For the last time, the leaders prayed to Mahatma not to begin the hunger strike. At the fort also, we were constantly apprehensive, that he still might attempt one.

We were released in 1945 with Jawaharlal. I was released from Almora jail on 14 June. A few days later, I met Mahatma at Poona. He asked me what are your views now, on truth and non-violence? I replied that I have always worshipped the truth, but I have my doubts if we will be able to wrest state power from the British without the use of force. There are several anecdotes about Mahatma but hardly any space or time for more here.

For some years, there was talk in Congress that there should not be another party within Congress. Mahatma was opposed to it. Even after the independence of the country, I was of the mind not to quit Congress since the country was in crisis. Though there were clear differences on this matter in the Socialist Party, my friends took my advice. On my part, I made it clear that should Congress set any rule which makes it impossible for us to stay in the Congress and compromises our self-respect, I will be the first to quit Congress and I did when such a situation arose. Such events have transpired during tough situations in my life, those that affected my future greatly, but it did not take me long to make my decision. I consider this my good fortune.

Only a few years remain of my life though physically I am not in good shape but my mind is alert and energetic. My life was spent fighting injustices. It is no small task, but is even more significant in a free India. When I look back I feel that when I do close my eyes permanently, I will have the satisfaction that the work I did at the Vidyapeeth, is enduring. I often claim it as my wealth on the basis of which I survive in politics. This is the truth.

Appendix II

Final years

The title is misleading but something will have to be said for it. Neither Narendra Dev nor his acquaintances suspected the end to come so soon, that too, when the year had just started. 19 February, 1956 was the last day of his life and he was cremated on the next day.

Acharya's health had been failing rapidly since 1953. It was the reason why he had resigned from the post of Vice Chancellor of the Banaras Hindu University. In 1954, Narendra Dev desired to visit America for treatment but changed his mind on the advice of the doctors, opting for England instead. At London, he received treatment but his health did not show much improvement. Then, Acharya decided to go to Austria. On 28 June, he reached Vienna where a famous physician began treating him.

Later, Narendra Dev left for Ovladis, a beautiful place, 4500 feet above sea-level. The climate there benefited his health. Two weeks stay improved his disposition so much that he stopped medication. No doubt Acharya felt that his health would be spared now. After twenty five days at Ovladis, Acharya went to Geneva by car. Narendra Dev returned to Germany via Berlin, Brussels and Yugoslavia and stayed in London for a while. He attended a session of the Labour party in Liverpool. London climate did not suit him, and he fell sick again, yet he went to Liverpool. Once there, he could hardly handle any strain and decided to return home. He came back to India via Cairo, Israel and London.

Narendra Dev's medical trip was also a visit to strengthen his belief in democratic socialism. Acharya's time was mostly

spent in meeting the diplomats, socialist activists and the VIP's in the countries that he visited. Despite ill-health he accommodated them. Felicitation ceremonies and meetings were organised for him. Though it reinforced Acharya's own beliefs. This strain affected his health adversely.

On his return to India Acharya wanted to spend his time in establishing a youth organisation, committed to democratic socialism but fate willed otherwise. Worries about the party plagued him. because the Praja Socialist Party was caught in the vortex of internal intrigues. Dr. Lohia and Acharya Kriplani were unable to work together and the latter resigned, leaving the party in an unenviable situation.

Though ill to save the party, Narendra Dev agreed to become its president and this decision proved fatal for him. He grew so demoralised at the strife and the decay that had set in, that it proved quite a mental shock for him.

Meanwhile, at the Avdi session of Congress, a proposal was passed, to create a 'society of socialist leanings.' It was never made public but this proposal created an illusion from which the Congress never really recovered. This should never have affected the programs of the Praja Socialist Party but with almost all of its Leaders and eminent intellectuals involved in infightings, it became difficult even for Acharya Narendra Dev, to redeem the situation. He could clearly foresee that the party was damaging itself and the concept of socialism in India. One can understand easily how an individual, living as an icon of democratic socialism, who saw in it, the prospects of prosperity and power of India, its unity and freedom, would give up on life watching it disintegrate.

Acharya sustained on courage but grew hollow inside. By the end of 1955, his health had deteriorated to the extent that one feared for his survival. On 3rd January 1956, he

was air-lifted to Pennadorai (Kerala). Shriprakash's contribution to Acharya's treatment was admirable but in vain. This author is not loath to admit that the history of the Praja Socialist Party, from 1953 to 1955, became the cause of Acharya Narendra Dev's demise.

Veteran of India's freedom struggle, social reformer and able educationist, Acharya Narendra Dev was the embodiment of scientific outlook, nobility of spirit, deep rooted humanism, compassion and scholarship. He zealously worked for preservation of human dignity and revolutionary transformation of society.

Bhagawati Sharan Singh presents an insightful account of this great personality.

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